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SOLAR ENERGY

IMD notes 'decreasing trend' in radiation

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'China and U.S. should be partners, not rivals'

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DIRECTIONS TO DGCA

HC orders de-licensing of Go First's fleet

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OF TEA AND LIVELIHOOD

Death & distress in the Dooars

Workers struggle with hunger, poor pay and loss of work

GROUND ZERO » PAGE 11

RECORD CHASE

Rampant PBKS hunts down KKR's 261

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14 constituencies in State see 69.23% voter turnout

First-time voters show their inked fingers after casting their votes at Chamarajpet, in Bengaluru Central Lok Sabha constituency, during the second phase of the polls on Friday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The voter turnout in the first of the two-phase Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka on Friday, which sealed the fate of 247 candidates, stood at 69.23%, marginally higher than the 68.96% recorded in 2019. Continuing the trend of urban apathy, the three constituencies in the State capital – Bengaluru North, Bengaluru Central, and Bengaluru South – recorded a turnout of 54.42%, 52.81%, and 53.15%, respectively. Mandya recorded the highest turnout at 81.48%. The voting percentage is likely to change after final reports from all polling stations are obtained, Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, said.

Barring a few incidents – such as at Indiganatta polling station in Chamarajanagar constituency where there was a clash following poll boycott and another at Vaddarapalya in Hassan where JD(S) and Congress supporters clashed – polling was peaceful for the most part. At Indiganatta, enraged by the taluk administration's attempts to persuade them to vote, the villagers pelted stones and barged into the polling booth, damaging EVMs and polling materials. An FIR was registered and a decision on whether a repoll was required would be taken by the ECI, said Mr. Meena.

In terms of turnout, Mandya was followed by Kolar (78.07%), Tumakuru (77.7%), Hassan (77.51%), Dakshina Kannada (77.43%), and Chickballapur (76.82%).

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RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 4, 6 & 8

SC backs EVMs, rules out revival of paper ballots

Court says 'blind distrust' is not helpful, declines pleas for VVPAT slips to be given to electors and for 100% cross-verification; key losing candidates can request and pay for verification, it suggests

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the electronic voting machine (EVM) system of polling and refused a plea to revive paper ballots.

"The weakness of the ballot paper system is well known and documented. Keeping in view the vast size of the Indian electorate of nearly 97 crore, the number of candidates who contest the elections, the number of polling booths where voting is held, and the problems faced with ballot papers, we would be undoing the electoral reforms by directing reintroduction of the ballot papers. EVMs offer significant advantages," the Supreme Court reasoned.

EVMs were first used in 1982 in the Assembly constituency of Paravur in Kerala in 50 out of 123 booths.

The court said that "blind distrust" of an institution or a system breeds unwarranted scepticism and impedes progress.

"We acknowledge the right of voters to question the working of EVMs, which are but an electronic device that has a direct impact on election results. However, it is also necessary to exercise care and caution when we raise aspersions on the integrity of the electoral process. Repeated and persistent doubts and despair, even without supporting evidence, can have the contrarian impact of creating distrust. This can reduce citizen participation and confidence in elections, essential for a healthy and robust democracy," Justice Sanjiv Khanna observed.

The judgment of the Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, who penned a separate but concurring opinion, coincided with the second phase of Lok Sabha polls.

The court refused the petitioners' suggestion that paper slips from Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units be handed over to electors to take a leisurely look before inserting them into the ballot boxes. It further dismissed the plea by the petitioners – the Association for Democratic Reforms and Arun Kumar Agarwal – for cross-verification of all EVMs and VVPATs across the country. Now, only 5% of EVM-VVPAT counts are randomly verified in any constituency.

"While we acknowledge the fundamental right of voters to ensure their vote is accurately recorded and counted, the same cannot be equated with the right to 100% counting of VVPAT slips or a right to physical access to the VVPAT slips," Justice Khanna noted.

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Vote of trust

The Supreme Court has said that the EVM system has served the vast Indian electorate well. Other key observations:

- Over 118 crore electors have cast their votes since EVMs were introduced in 1982
- In the 2019 General Elections, about 61.4 crore people cast their votes; 23.3 lakh ballot units, 16.35 lakh control units and 17.40 lakh VVPAT units were used
- For 2024, 97 crore people are registered to vote; 21.60 lakh ballot units, 16.80 lakh control units and 17.7 lakh VVPAT units will be used

SC's judgment a tight slap to Opposition: Modi

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday termed the Supreme Court judgment on EVMs as a "tight slap" to Opposition parties, including the Congress. He also demanded an apology from them for "committing the sin of creating distrust" over EVMs. » PAGE 12

Campaign for VVPATs to continue: Cong.

NEW DELHI
The Opposition parties, including the Congress, on Friday said that they would continue with their political campaign on greater use of voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) to increase the public's trust in the electoral process. » PAGE 12

NEARBY

Turnout in city marginally lower than in 2019

BENGALURU
Scenes at many polling stations on Friday morning had raised hopes that the city might come out in large numbers to vote. However, at the end of the polling time, the turnout was marginally lower than that in 2019. » Page 4

Cash seized, Sudhakar booked

BENGALURU
A flying squad of election officials seized ₹4.8 crore in cash from a house at Yelahanka in Chickballapur constituency on Thursday. The officials booked a case against BJP candidate K. Sudhakar. » Page 6

LS polls: Focus now shifts to NK

BENGALURU
With the high-pitched battles in South and coastal Karnataka constituencies coming to an end, the battleground will now shift to North and Central Karnataka regions that will go to the polls on May 7. » Page 8

PROPERTYPLUS » PAGE 7

Phase II of LS polls records 61% voter turnout

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Polling for the second phase of the Lok Sabha election in 88 constituencies across 13 States was largely peaceful on Friday, with the voter turnout placed at nearly 61%, as per provisional data from the Election Commission (EC).

The turnout in the second phase of the 2019 election was 69.44%.

All 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, eight seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, six seats in Madhya Pradesh, five seats each in Assam and Bihar, three seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and one seat each in Manipur, Tripura, and Jammu and Kashmir went to the polls on Friday.

Voters standing in a queue at a booth at Deepanjalinagar in Bengaluru on Friday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Over 15.88 crore voters were eligible to exercise their franchise across 1.67 lakh polling stations. A total of 1,202 candidates were in the fray.

According to the EC data at 11.30 p.m., the highest voting percentage was recorded in Tripura, which registered 79.66% polling, while the lowest turnout was in Uttar Pradesh at 54.85%. Kerala recorded a turnout of 70.35% and Karnataka 69.23%.

Some of the prominent leaders in the fray were BJP'sRajeev Chandrasekhar andHema Malini, and Congress's Rahul Gandhi and Shashi Tharoor.

The turnout in violence-hit Manipur was 78.78%. There were complaints of disturbances in Ukhrul and Senapati. Chief Electoral Officer Pradeep Kumar Jha said at least one EVM was damaged at a polling station in Ukhrul.

In Bihar, where five constituencies went to polls, a turnout of 57.81% was recorded. All eyes were on Purnea, where don-turned-politician and five-times parliamentarian Pappu Yadav is in the fray. Preventive arrests of 126 people were carried out to maintain peaceful polling.

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CBI seizes cache of arms and ammunition in Sandeshkhali

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday seized a cache of arms and ammunition during its searches on two premises in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali in the case related to the attack on Enforcement Directorate officials on January 5.

Among the seized articles were three revolvers and one pistol of foreign make, a revolver and one Colt official police revolver, one country-made pistol, 120 9-mm bullets, 50 cartridges of .45 calibre, 120 cartridges of 9-mm calibre, 50 .380 cartridges and eight .32 cartridges.

The cache was seized during CBI searches on two premises in Sandeshkhali.

In March, the CBI had registered the case following a directive from the Calcutta High Court to investigate the attack on the ED officials during their searches of the residential and official premises of now-suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan. The CBI searches were carried out based on inputs that the items lost by the ED team and other incriminating articles may be hidden at the residence of an associate of Mr. Shahjahan in Sandeshkhali.

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FIR against Surya for seeking votes on religious grounds

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Jayanagar police have registered an FIR against BJP's candidate for Bengaluru South and incumbent MP Tejasvi Surya for allegedly soliciting votes on religious grounds.

The Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka in a statement posted on X, said, "Case is booked against Tejasvi Surya, MP and candidate of Bengaluru South PC on 25.04.24 at Jayanagar PS u/s 123(3) for posting a video in X handle and soliciting votes on the ground of religion."

Video

Mr. Surya, who is known for his controversial statements, reposted a video of him talking to a news agency, in which he said, "We the BJP voters are 80%, but we come out and vote only 20%. The Congress voters are 20%, but they come out and vote 80%. This is the ground reality. My request to you all BJP voters is, every single vote of yours matters. Please come out and vote. Because if you are not voting, the Congress' 20% is definitely voting."

Police sources also said they have taken cognisance of another post of Mr. Surya, where he allegedly sought votes citing the Ram Mandir and asked people to vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "a better and secure future".

'Loco pilots were not watching cricket at time of crash'

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The investigation into last year's tragic collision of two passenger trains in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, which left 17 passengers dead and 34 injured, has not revealed any evidence to prove that the locomotive pilots of one of the trains were watching cricket at the time of the accident.

In March this year, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw claimed that "both the loco pilot and co-pilot were distracted by the cricket match which was going on".

According to sources in the East Coast Railway, the analysis of data usage on mobile phones used by Loco Pilot S.M.S Rao and Assistant Loco Pilot S. Chiranjeevi – both of whom died in the accident – gave no indication that they were watching cricket. The call details and data usage were analysed by the Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunications Engineer and the Divisional Safety Officer of the Waltair Division. The Commissioner of Railway Safety Pranjeev Saxena, who conducted a detailed inquiry into the accident, has also not made any mention about the loco pilots watching cricket in his report.

The Railway Minister had accused the loco pilots of being distracted by a cricket match during the A.P. train accident last year. PTI

Apart from the two loco pilots, the train manager or guard of the Visakhapatnam-Palasa Passenger also died when their train collided with the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada Passenger on October 29, 2023. The CRS inquiry concluded that an "error in train working" caused the accident and held the train crew and operating staff responsible for the crash, among others.

On March 3, however, Mr. Vaishnaw told a news agency in New Delhi that "both the loco pilot and co-pilot were distracted by the cricket match".

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M BG-BGE

GETTY IMAGES

Return of the queen: Peres Jepchirchir lays down a marker

The 30-year-old Kenyan, who has battled injury problems, crushed the women-only world record at the London Marathon, proving that she is very difficult to beat when healthy. She also put herself in a position to defend her Olympic crown and become the first woman to win two marathon titles at the Games

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse

Between 2019 and 2022, Peres Jepchirchir reigned supreme in the marathon world.

Unbeaten over five races, she triumphed in Saitama (2019) and Valencia (2020) before going on a historic run. First, she claimed Olympic gold in Sapporo's oppressive heat in August 2021. Three months later, she finished first at the New York City Marathon. And in 2022, she mastered the Boston Marathon's challenging hills to win her third 26.2-miler in nine months.

Derailed by injury

But just as Jepchirchir looked as if she might build an undeniable case to be considered the greatest female marathon runner of all time, a hip injury derailed her journey.

Forced to the sidelines, the Kenyan was not able to compete until the 2023 London Marathon. Ahead of the event, the question on every marathon fan's lips was whether Jepchirchir could pick up where she left off. She very nearly did, coming in third in a tight finish, five seconds behind winner Sifan Hassan. It was her first-ever defeat in an international marathon, a turn of events that confounded her six-year-old daughter Natalia.

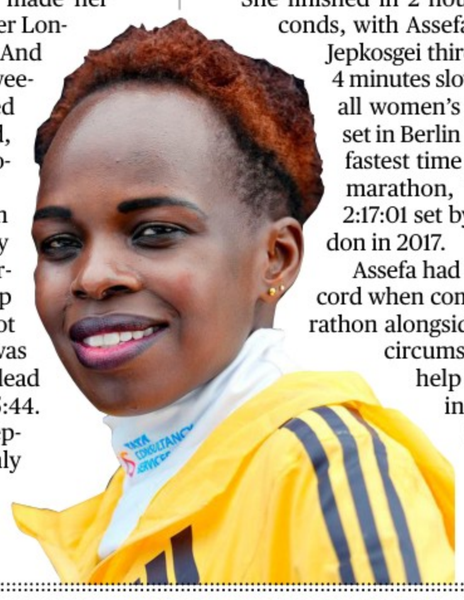
> I was not expecting to run a world record. I knew that we were going to break the record but I was not expecting it to be me

"When I was running the London Marathon, she came and asked me, 'Why you come third place? Usually you are the winner!'" It was an understandable question, because Natalia had never seen her mother lose. "She heard people talking about me coming back from injury, then she said, 'Mama you are [free] from injury now, you will be ok. Mama you will win!'"

Jepchirchir was "happy" with third "because I was able to train for only two months" – but the loss and her daughter's words made her even more determined to conquer London at the next time of asking. And she did it in some style last weekend, beating a field considered one of the best ever assembled, with three of the four fastest women in history competing.

The 2024 London Marathon was run in an unseasonable chilly 7 degrees Celsius, with Jepchirchir wearing a black hat to keep warm. The temperature did not match the race pace, which was red-hot from the beginning, the lead pack eating up the first 5km in 15:44.

So it was no surprise when Jepchirchir crushed the women-only world record, joining Ingrid Kristiansen, Margaret Okayo and Edna Kiplagat as the only women to win New York, Boston, and London. Significantly, Jepchirchir is the only one among them to also win Olympic gold.



Making a statement

The 30-year-old had by far the strongest finish as she easily left world-record holder Tigst Assefa and two other rivals behind to sprint alone down the final stretch in front of Buckingham Palace.

She finished in 2 hours, 16 minutes, 16 seconds, with Assefa second and Joyciline Jepkosgei third. That was more than 4 minutes slower than Assefa's overall women's world record (2:11:53) set in Berlin last year, but it was the fastest time ever in a women-only marathon, beating the mark of 2:17:01 set by Mary Keitany in London in 2017.

Assefa had smashed the world record when completing the Berlin Marathon alongside male pacemakers – circumstances that typically help set a faster pace than in a women-only marathon and improve a runner's chances of breaking the world record.

In addition to laying down a marker that she still is a force to be reckoned with, Jepchirchir put herself in a position to defend her Olympic crown. The London Marathon was the final qualifying race before Kenya's Olympic selectors pick their team for Paris

"This is the last event for Kenya to select the team. When I crossed the line, I knew that I was going to defend my title in Paris," she said. "I was trying to work extra hard to defend my title in the Olympics. I am so happy to qualify for the Olympics and I feel grateful.

"It means a lot to me because last year I was expecting to win. Unfortunately, I didn't win but I was happy too. This year I'm so so happy. I was not expecting to run a world record. I knew that we were going to break the record but I was not expecting it to be me. When I was at 40km, I said, 'Let's relax. And then 41km I would accelerate or wait until 600m.'"

A three-time World Half Marathon champion and the world record holder over that distance, Jepchirchir is known for her finishing kick and her knack of winning close races. Both qualities suffered a rare failure at the 2023 London Marathon, and so the triumph this year was a confidence boost for the 30-year-old.

"My strong finishing kick helps me a lot," she said. "When I reach 800m it's difficult to be defeated. Last year I think it [why she could not finish as she normally does] was because it was raining, I was waiting until 600m as it was windy."

No woman has ever won two Olympic marathon titles. If Jepchirchir manages that, she will have added immeasurably to her case for being considered the greatest-ever – not a state of affairs the young girl who grew up in a remote Kenyan farm in Kosaji in Turbo ever imagined.

> I was trying to work extra hard to defend my title in the Olympics. I am so happy to qualify... I know it won't be easy but I'm confident for the summer

Rising above the odds

Jepchirchir dropped out of school because her family could not afford the fees and she saw running as a way out of the financial difficulties. "Life was not easy," she said in an interview with Kenyan outlet KTN. "We are 24 siblings and that is why I decided to work hard because we had minimal resources at home. Small scale farming was the only source of income to our family."

Her talent and hard work brought her to the Olympic stage, which then changed her life forever. "While I was running [in Sapporo] and approaching the finish line, I was thinking, I have raised the name of my village, the entire family to be known from nowhere. To be an Olympian is a great thing. It has brought me a lot of honour ... you get more recognition as an Olympic champion."

Having proven in London that she is very difficult to beat when healthy, Jepchirchir is looking forward to the 2024 Games. "I now know I have a great chance to defend my title in Paris," she said. "I know it won't be easy but I'm confident for the summer."

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	36	9,990	17
2	Jannik Sinner	22	8,660	19
3	Carlos Alcaraz	20	8,145	17
4	Daniil Medvedev	28	7,085	19
5	Alexander Zverev	27	5,425	26
6	Casper Ruud	25	4,480	24
7	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	4,030	25
8	Andrey Rublev	26	3,830	24
9	Hubert Hurkacz	27	3,675	24
10	Grigor Dimitrov	32	3,640	22
11	Alex de Minaur	25	3,470	25
12	Holger Rune	20	3,245	23
13	Taylor Fritz	26	2,560	25
14	Ugo Humbert	25	2,535	29
15	Ben Shelton	21	2,480	25

Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal
Rank 82 ▼ 2 spots

Ramkumar Ramanathan
Rank 360 ▼ 2 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	22	10,560	19
2	Aryna Sabalenka	25	7,848	17
3	Coco Gauff	20	7,258	19
4	Elena Rybakina	24	6,293	19
5	Jessica Pegula	30	4,870	22
6	Maria Sakkari	28	4,195	24
7	Marketa Vondrousova	24	4,090	17
8	Qinwen Zheng	21	4,000	21
9	Ons Jabeur	29	3,533	23
10	Jelena Ostapenko	26	3,438	23
11	Daria Kasatkina	26	3,313	24
12	Karolina Muchova	27	2,965	11
13	Jasmine Paolini	28	2,938	29
14	Beatriz Haddad Maia	27	2,830	24
15	Danielle Collins	30	2,639	18

Top Indians ▶

Ankita Raina
Rank 258 ▼ 4 spots

Sahaja Yamalapalli
Rank 309 ▲ 3 spots

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	34	24	5	5	82	26	56	77
2	Man. City	33	23	7	3	80	32	48	76
3	Liverpool	34	22	8	4	75	34	41	74
4	Aston Villa	34	20	6	8	71	50	21	66
5	Tottenham	32	18	6	8	65	49	16	60
6	Man. United	33	16	5	12	51	50	1	53
7	Newcastle	33	15	5	13	69	54	15	50
8	West Ham	34	13	9	12	54	63	-9	48
9	Chelsea	32	13	8	11	61	57	4	47
10	Bournemouth	34	12	9	13	49	60	-11	45
11	Brighton	33	11	11	11	52	54	-2	44
12	Wolves	34	12	7	15	46	54	-8	43
13	Fulham	34	12	6	16	50	54	-4	42
14	Crystal Palace	34	10	9	15	44	56	-12	39
15	Brentford	34	9	8	17	52	59	-7	35
16	Everton *	34	11	8	15	36	48	-12	33
17	N. Forest *	34	7	9	18	42	60	-18	26
18	Luton Town	34	6	7	21	47	75	-28	25
19	Burnley	34	5	8	21	37	69	-32	23
20	Sheffield	34	3	7	24	33	92	-59	16

* Everton deducted eight points and Forest deducted four points following breaches of the PL's Profitability and Sustainability Rules

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Inter Milan	33	27	5	1	79	18	61	86
2	AC Milan	33	21	6	6	64	39	25	69
3	Juventus	33	18	10	5	47	26	21	64
4	Bologna	33	17	11	5	48	26	22	62
5	Roma	33	17	7	9	59	39	20	58
6	Atalanta	32	16	6	10	59	37	22	54
7	Lazio	33	16	4	13	42	35	7	52
8	Napoli	33	13	10	10	50	41	9	49
9	Fiorentina	32	13	8	11	45	36	9	47
10	Torino	33	11	13	9	31	29	2	46
11	Monza	33	11	10	12	35	43	-8	43
12	Genoa	33	9	12	12	35	40	-5	39
13	Lecce	33	8	11	14	30	48	-18	35
14	Cagliari	33	7	11	15	36	56	-20	32
15	Verona	33	7	10	16	31	44	-13	31
16	Empoli	33	8	7	18	26	48	-22	31
17	Udinese	33	4	16	13	31	50	-19	28
18	Frosinone	33	6	10	17	40	63	-23	28
19	Sassuolo	33	6	8	19	39	65	-26	26
20	Salernitana	33	2	9	22	26	70	-44	15

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	32	25	6	1	70	22	48	81
2	Barcelona	32	21	7	4	64	37	27	70
3	Girona	32	21	5	6	67	40	27	68
4	Atletico Madrid	32	19	4	9	59	38	21	61
5	Athletic Bilbao	32	16	10	6	52	30	22	58
6	Real Sociedad	32	13	12	7	46	34	12	51
7	Real Betis	32	12	12	8	40	38	2	48
8	Valencia	32	13	8	11	35	34	1	47
9	Villarreal	32	11	9	12	51	55	-4	42
10	Getafe	32	9	13	10	38	44	-6	40
11	Osasuna	32	11	6	15	37	46	-9	39
12	Sevilla	32	9	10	13	41	45	-4	37
13	Las Palmas	32	10	7	15	30	39	-9	37
14	Alaves	32	9	8	15	28	38	-10	35
15	Rayo Vallecano	32	7	13	12	27	39	-12	34
16	Real Mallorca	32	6	13	13	26	38	-12	31
17	Celta Vigo	32	7	10	15	37	47	-10	31
18	Cadiz	32	4	13	15	22	45	-23	25
19	Granada	32	3	9	20	33	61	-28	18
20	Almeria	32	1	11	20	31	64	-33	14

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Leverkusen	30	25	5	0	75	20	55	80
2	Bayern	30	21	3	6	87	37	50	66
3	Stuttgart	30	20	3	7	68	36	32	63
4	RB Leipzig	30	18	5	7	69	34	35	59
5	Dortmund	30	16	9	5	58	35	23	57
6	E. Frankfurt	30	11	12	7	46	40	6	45
7	SC Freiburg	30	11	7	12	42	53	-11	40
8	FC Augsburg	30	10	9	11	48	49	-1	39
9	Hoffenheim	30	11	6	13	53	60	-7	39
10	Heidenheim	30	8	10	12	43	52	-9	34
11	Werder Bremen	30	9	7	14	38	50	-12	34
12	M'gladbach	30	7	10	13	53	60	-7	31
13	Wolfsburg	30	8	7	15	35	50	-15	31
14	Union Berlin	30	8	5	17	26	50	-24	29
15	Mainz	30	5	12	13	31	48	-17	27
16	Bochum	30	5	12	13	34	60	-26	27
17	Cologne	30	4	10	16	23	53	-30	22
18	Darmstadt	30	3	8	19	30	72	-42	17

Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Kane Williamson	859	919
2	Joe Root	824	923
3	Babar Azam	768	882
3	Daryl Mitchell	768	804
5	Steve Smith	757	947
6	Rohit Sharma	751	813
7	Yashasvi Jaiswal	740	740
8	Dimuth Karunaratne	739	783
9	Virat Kohli	737	937
10	Harry Brook	735	773

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	870	904
2	Josh Hazlewood	847	864
2	Jasprit Bumrah	847	881
4	Kagiso Rabada	834	902
5	Pat Cummins	820	914
6	Nathan Lyon	801	801
7	Ravindra Jadeja	788	899
8	James Anderson	739	903
9	Shaheen Afridi	733	836
10	Kyle Jamieson	729	836

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	824	898
2	Shubman Gill	801	847
3	Virat Kohli	768	909
4	Harry Tector	746	767
4	Rohit Sharma	746	882
6	Daryl Mitchell	728	750
7	David Warner	723	869
8	Pathum Nissanka	711	728
9	Dawid Malan	707	730
10	Rassie van der Dussen	701	796

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Keshav Maharaj	716	741
2	Josh Hazlewood	688	727
3	Adam Zampa	686	695
4	Mohammed Siraj	678	736
5	Jasprit Bumrah	665	838
6	Mohammad Nabi	656	657
7	Shaheen Afridi	650	688
8	Kuldeep Yadav	645	760
9	Trent Boult	643	775
10	Bernard Scholtz	642	642

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	861	910
2	Philip Salt	802	802
3	Mohammad Rizwan	800	875
4	Aiden Markram	755	796
5	Babar Azam	753	896
6	Yashasvi Jaiswal	714	739
7	Rilee Rossouw	689	724
8	Jos Buttler	680	687
9	Finn Allen	666	723
10	Reeza Hendricks	660	674

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Adil Rashid	726	746
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	687	797
3	Akeal Hosein	664	683
4	Axar Patel	660	667
5	Maheesh Theekshana	659	684
5	Ravi Bishnoi	659	699
7	Josh Hazlewood	654	806
7	Tabraiz Shamsi	654	821
9	Rashid Khan	645	816
10	Reece Topley	643	662

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5. Story telling nook
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7. Mini library
8. Learning centre
9. Gym
10. Cross-fit corner
11. Yoga/Dance floor
12. Interactive gym
13. Art and craft room
14. Business centre
15. Video games
16. Gaming arcade
17. AV room
18. Board games room
19. Indoor play area
20. Squash court
21. Salon
22. Spa

FACILITIES

23. Steam and sauna
24. Drivers/Maid dormitory
25. Ironing shop
26. Convenience store
27. Association room
28. Air filling station
29. Car wash bay

OUTDOOR AMENITIES

30. Car charging station
31. Entrance plaza
32. Bus waiting bay
33. Jogging track
34. Play mounds
35. Amphitheatre
36. Bonfire pits
37. Pet park
38. Golf putting green
39. Cycle rack with bicycle
40. Basketball court
41. Sports viewing gallery
42. Nanny's corner
43. Multipurpose court
44. Leisure seating zone
45. Outdoor gym
46. Skating arena
47. DIY garden
48. Co-working space
49. Hammock garden
50. Reflexology walkway
51. Rock climbing wall
52. Children's play area
53. Kids obstacle park
54. Meditation zone
55. Party lawn
56. Central tree plaza
57. Senior citizen pavilion
58. Sandpit
59. Jungle gym
60. Cognitive play area
61. Tot Lot
62. Interactive floor games zone
63. Maze garden
64. Chalk board wall
65. Hopscotch
66. Giant chess
67. Trampoline
68. Cricket practice net
69. Sculpture court
70. Natural trail

SWIMMING POOL AMENITIES

71. Adult swimming pool
72. Kids pool
73. Poolside loungers
74. Rain curtain
75. Kids splash pool
76. Poolside party deck with barbeque corner
77. Interactive water jets
78. Poolside movie screen facility

TERRACE AMENITIES

79. Terrace party corner
80. Terrace hangout plaza
81. Sky cinema
82. Terrace hobby corner
83. Terrace infinity walkway

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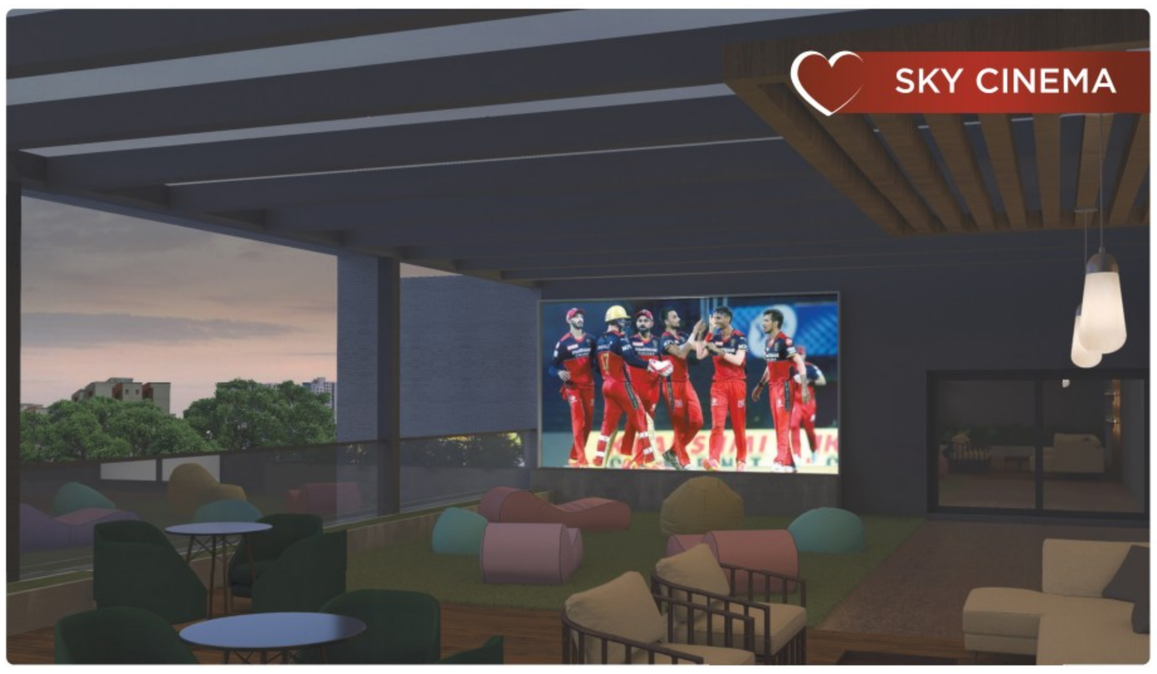
EXCITING AMENITIES



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GETTY IMAGES

After 'breaking barriers', Ruud looks to shatter the glass ceiling

In recent weeks, the 25-year-old Norwegian beat a World No. 1 for the first time and claimed the biggest title of his career. Having thrice fallen at the final hurdle of a Grand Slam, he hopes the last few weeks' breakthroughs help him realise his biggest dream: a Major triumph

Reuters
Associated Press

It's not unreasonable to surmise that a player good enough to reach three Grand Slam finals and peak as high as World No. 2 would have also tasted success at at least one ATP 500 or Masters 1000 event. Anything to the contrary would seem incongruous.

And yet that was the situation Casper Ruud found himself in until last week. A former junior World No. 1, the Norwegian was long regarded as one of men's tennis' hottest young prospects – but his lack of titles in the tour's bigger tournaments meant that questions were beginning to be asked about whether Ruud was truly a 'top top' player.

Answering the doubters

The 25-year-old finally answered the doubters at the Barcelona Open, defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas – a week after losing to the Greek in the Monte-Carlo Masters final – to win the 500-level event, the biggest title of his career.

Ruud's straight-set victory also earned him his first title of the season, after three runner-up finishes, and his first trophy since Estoril in April 2023.

"Honestly, this has been worth the wait," Ruud said. "A lot of finals that I've lost have been tough. Any time you reach a final, it's nonetheless a good week, so you can't be too hard on yourself, but this one has been a long time coming.

"It means a lot, this is the biggest title of my career, it's something I've chased for a long time already," he told Teledeporte. "I've never won a 500 before or a 1000. The last six, seven months I've taken a few steps in the right direction in my game and I'm glad it's paying off."

Tsitsipas had comfortably won in Monte Carlo, but this time Ruud turned the tables. Asked what he had done differently, Ruud said, "Just to kind of [bring] it to him a little bit more. In Monte Carlo, I was always on the back foot, too far behind, and he had too much time to control the game."

> The last six, seven months I've taken a few steps in the right direction in my game and I'm glad it's paying off

The victory tasted even sweeter because it came on a court named after his idol. "I'm super happy to do it here in Barcelona in front of a packed stadium and on Rafa Nadal Court," he said. "It's special to me because I looked up to him [Nadal] all my childhood, came here myself as a 13-year-old boy to watch him and the others play here. It's a great feeling."

Unclogging a mental block

At Monte Carlo, Ruud had spoken of his disappointment of not getting it done in the bigger events. "I want to break the barrier and win a big tournament like this," he said. While he did not break that specific barrier in the Principality, he did shatter another. Until his semifinal against record 24-time Major winner Novak Djokovic, Ruud had lost all five of their previous meetings. Indeed, he held a 0-11 record against top-three players at that point in time.

With the match tied at a set apiece, Ruud had a mental breakthrough: he relaxed, played some of his best tennis and calmly closed out the victory against one of the hardest players to beat in tennis history. "Beating a world number one is something I have never done," Ruud said. "You know how good these guys are under pressure... This is a day I will remember for a long time."

If the victory over Djokovic was affirmation that Ruud could beat the truly elite, the Barcelona triumph proved that he could hold his nerve with everything on the line in the bigger events. Both instances featured a braver, more proactive style under pressure – a consequence, he said, of staying in the moment.

"Sometimes you play your best tennis when you don't think too much," he said. "It just goes into automatic mode. I play my best when I'm cool and don't think too much about it out there."

If Ruud can do this more consistently, it will add another gear to his smooth modern baseline style. Despite possessing a heavy, powerful forehand, the 25-year-old can sometimes be guilty of passive tennis, engaging in backhand cross-court exchanges, instead of looking to pull the trigger on his forehand. At an even 6'0", Ruud is not going to blow people off court with raw power, but he has enough forehand muscle to pick his moments to end points.

Overcoming small margins

Given how solid Ruud's 'floor' is – two-time Major winner Carlos Alcaraz once said that "beating Casper means you are playing well [because] it is really tough, big rallies" – the added ability to shorten points in the big moments, when needed, will raise his 'ceiling'. With how small the margins in top-flight tennis are, that could prove the difference at the business end.

"I feel like I'm improving as a player but it's just the margins are so small at this level these days," he said. "There's not just 10 or 20 guys that can play well, it's 80 or 100 guys."

Ruud's mental game has benefited from the experience of overcoming a slump. After a successful 2022, during which he rose as high as No. 2 before ending the year at No. 3 after reaching the championship match at the ATP Finals, the Norwegian struggled for much of 2023.

"It's not fun at all," Ruud told rolandgarros.com. "As tennis players we live off trying to win matches, that's sort of everything we have. When you lose early you're like, 'What's going on? Am I worse? Are other players much better?'

"It's always like this constant battle to try to win as many matches as possible; you sort of start thinking when you lose more than you would like, what am I doing wrong? It was a season to try to gain experience from competing as a top three or top five member."

In 2023, Ruud did, however, have another excellent run at Roland-Garros, matching his 2022 performance by reaching the final.

> [Winning a Major] is my biggest goal, my biggest dream. It's been close, but no cigar, so I'm going to keep working and try to get it one day

"I believed more and more that what happened [in 2022] was not a one-hit wonder," he said at the time. "This Roland-Garros might have been very important for my career to build my future... hopefully one day I'm going to aim for a Slam title. That's my biggest goal, my biggest dream. It's been close, but no cigar, so I'm going to keep working and try to get it one day."

With 10 of his 11 career titles coming on clay, Ruud is eyeing next month's French Open as another opportunity to break the glass ceiling at the Majors. Having been beaten in title rounds by Nadal (2022 Roland-Garros), Alcaraz (2022 US Open) and Djokovic (2023 Roland-Garros), the Norwegian will be hoping his recent mental breakthroughs help him take the next step.

Ruud knows that players don't get classified in the top bracket until they win a Grand Slam title. Given the depth in men's tennis, he won't have it easy. But the recent weeks show that he has begun to believe he has it in him. At this level, that can make all the difference.

GAME THEORY

Bunnies — who us?

With the IPL in full spate and runs flowing thick and fast, here is a change of pace and format: red-ball runs from a quarter which isn't expected to score any. Presenting the most 'prolific' No. 11 batters in Test history:

MOST TEST RUNS AT NO. 11

Player	Country	Innings	Runs	Ave	50s	0s
James Anderson	England	187	687	7.71	1	26
Trent Boult	New Zealand	81	644	16.10	1	11
M. Muralidaran	Sri Lanka	98	623	11.32	0	20
Glenn McGrath	Australia	128	603	7.63	1	32
Courtney Walsh	West Indies	122	553	7.47	0	27
Bob Willis	England	78	452	12.91	0	7
Brian Statham	England	46	348	13.92	0	9
Makhaya Ntini	South Africa	76	344	9.05	0	12
Nathan Lyon	Australia	52	340	14.16	0	6
Josh Hazlewood	Australia	61	313	12.03	0	9
Alan Connolly	Australia	38	234	11.14	0	8
Morne Morkel	South Africa	40	231	8.25	0	12
Steve Harmison	England	29	225	11.84	0	6
Shannon Gabriel	West Indies	82	223	4.46	0	21
Zaheer Khan	India	21	210	17.50	1	5
Allan Donald	South Africa	32	204	13.60	0	6
Jeff Thomson	Australia	24	201	14.35	0	0
Danish Kaneria	Pakistan	58	197	6.79	0	17
Richard Collinge	New Zealand	17	184	20.44	1	2
Lance Gibbs	West Indies	71	183	4.94	0	10
Derek Underwood	England	27	182	18.20	0	3
Ewen Chatfield	New Zealand	52	176	8.38	0	11
Terry Alderman	Australia	42	173	7.86	0	7
Devon Malcolm	England	49	172	5.37	0	14
Arthur Mailey	Australia	22	171	12.21	0	2
B.S. Chandrasekhar	India	75	164	4.43	0	19

SOURCE: ESPNcricinfo

James Anderson

Trent Boult

M. Muralidaran

Glenn McGrath

Courtney Walsh

PICTURE THIS

GETTY IMAGES

Dive and shoot

This photograph depicts action from the REWE Final4 handball tournament in Cologne, Germany. The REWE Final4 is the premium event of German club handball, and is marketed as a 'colourful supporting programme' for the whole family.

The sport of handball involves two teams of seven competitors (six court players, one goalkeeper) aiming to score goals by passing the ball with their hands and throwing it into the opposing net. The team with the most goals after two 30-minute periods wins.

Players are not allowed into the D-zone around the goalkeeper. This means they often have to slam the ball in from distance or shoot while 'diving' into the zone. While the sport's concept has been around for ages — there are records of games similar to handball in Ancient Greece and Rome — the modern version was only played towards the later part of the 19th century, primarily in Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Men's field handball was played at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The indoor version made the summer Games in 1972, with the women's competition debuting in 1976.

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AADITYA KUMAR
Classroom Course

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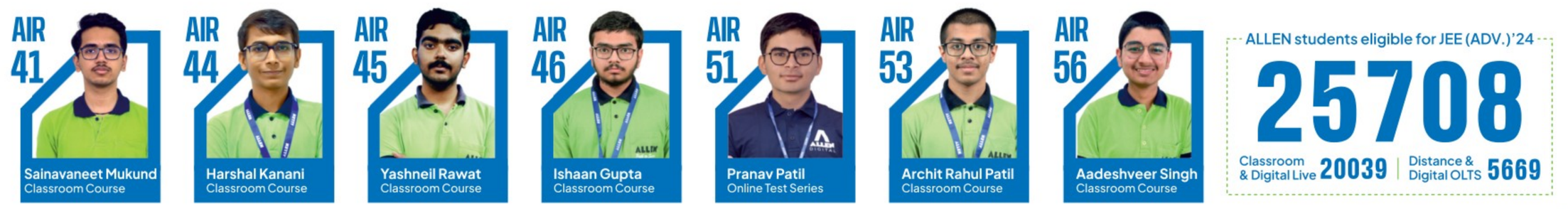
AIR 27 Akshat Chaplot, Classroom Course
AIR 28 Meet Parekh, Classroom Course
AIR 30 Priyansh Pranjal, Distance Course
AIR 32 Himanshu Yadav, Classroom Course
AIR 34 Sanvi Jain, Distance Course
AIR 37 Shayna Sinha, Distance Course
AIR 40 Visharad Srivastava, Classroom Course



AIR 41 Sainavaneet Mukund, Classroom Course
AIR 44 Harshal Kanani, Classroom Course
AIR 45 Yashneil Rawat, Classroom Course
AIR 46 Ishaan Gupta, Classroom Course
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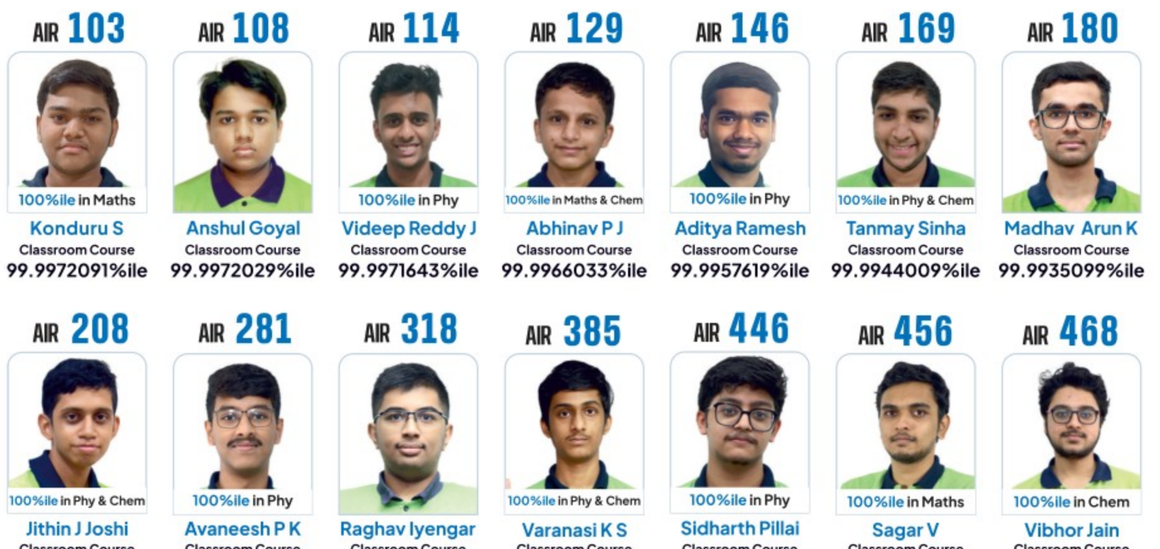

AIR 103 — 100%ile in Maths — Konduru S, Classroom Course, 99.9972091%ile
AIR 108 — Anshul Goyal, Classroom Course, 99.9972029%ile
AIR 114 — 100%ile in Phy — Videep Reddy J, Classroom Course, 99.9971643%ile
AIR 129 — 100%ile in Maths & Chem — Abhinav P J, Classroom Course, 99.9966033%ile
AIR 146 — 100%ile in Phy — Aditya Ramesh, Classroom Course, 99.9957619%ile
AIR 169 — 100%ile in Phy & Chem — Tanmay Sinha, Classroom Course, 99.9944009%ile
AIR 180 — Madhav Arun K, Classroom Course, 99.9935099%ile

AIR 208 — 100%ile in Phy & Chem — Jithin J Joshi, Classroom Course, 99.992392%ile
AIR 281 — 100%ile in Phy — Avaneesh P K, Classroom Course, 99.9888366%ile
AIR 318 — Raghav Iyengar, Classroom Course, 99.9859803%ile
AIR 385 — 100%ile in Phy & Chem — Varanasi K S, Classroom Course, 99.9839386%ile
AIR 446 — 100%ile in Phy — Sidharth Pillai, Classroom Course, 99.9804896%ile
AIR 456 — 100%ile in Maths — Sagar V, Classroom Course, 99.9802311%ile
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M BG-BGE

Former India spinner Anil Kumble after casting his vote in Bengaluru. ANIL KUMBLE / X

Actor Rakshit Shetty after exercising his franchise at Kukkikatte in Udupi. UMESH S. SHETTIGAR

Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy and his wife Sudha Murty arrive at a polling station in Bengaluru to cast their votes. PTI

Para swimmer Vishwas K.S. at a booth in Bengaluru South constituency to cast his vote on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SNIPPETS

They cast their votes before getting married

It was one of the most important days of their lives. However, that did not deter them from fulfilling their duties as responsible citizens. Before getting married, these brides made sure that they exercised their franchise as they turned up at their voting booths dressed in their wedding attire and got their fingers inked. In the Udupi-Chikkamagaluru constituency, four brides made a pitstop at the polling booth before heading to their respective wedding halls. Sowmya of Kundur in Mudigere taluk, and Spandana of Kutagodu village in Sringeri taluk cast their votes en route to their wedding halls.

60 in-patients from two private hospitals vote

Around 60 in-patients from two private hospitals in the city were able to exercise their franchise with assistance provided by the hospitals. As many as 50 patients from the nine branches of Manipal Hospitals and 10 patients from SPARSH Hospitals were transported in ambulances to their respective polling booths from the hospital to cast their votes.

Green corridors were created across constituencies to ensure hassle-free voting for these patients. Karthik Rajagopal, Chief Operating Officer, Manipal Hospitals, said the patients aged between 25 and 103 including those in the ICU were taken to the polling stations after a comprehensive health assessment.

The 10 patients from SPARSH Hospitals – aged between 35 and 70 – were taken in five ambulances to their respective polling booths, said Joseph Pasangha, Group COO of the hospital.

EVM glitches at many polling stations across Karnataka

Polling was stalled due to technical snags in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) at many polling stations across the State. Polling was stalled at Arenur near Alur in Chikkamagaluru district, for about 45 minutes due to a technical snag. There were reports of EVMs developing technical problems at Halepete and Chennapura, near Birur, which is part of the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency. In Karopadi of Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, voting was interrupted due to a fault in the EVM.

Nisarga Grand Hotel serves free food for voters

To encourage voting, many establishments in Bengaluru, including restaurants announced that they would be providing free food and snacks to voters. On polling day, restaurants kept their promise to voters who showed their inked fingers after casting their votes. At Nisarga Grand Hotel on Nrupatunga Road, there were long queues as many voters, after casting their votes, lined up to relish benne (butter) dosa, ghee laddu, and juice. The restaurant offered these delicacies to voters who showed their inked fingers under the 'Vote maadi, oota maadi' (cast your vote and have food) campaign. The restaurant has done such campaigns for four (Assembly and Lok Sabha) elections since 2018. Free auto rides were also available for senior citizens to cast their votes. Social worker Syed Raheem organised free auto rides for voters to reach their polling stations in the K.R. Puram area.

Voter turnout in city constituencies marginally lower than in 2019

The soaring mercury seemed to have had an impact. There was an initial rush in the morning, followed by thin crowds. The turnout picked up in the evening

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Scenes at many polling stations on Friday morning – long queues and people posting on social media that it was taking over two hours to cast their votes – had raised hopes that the city might come out in large numbers to vote. However, at the end of the polling time, the tentative turnout was marginally less than in 2019. The figure for Bengaluru Rural has seen a considerable jump.

Some of the celebrities who voted were Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Jayanagar, cricket coach Rahul Dravid, Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy, and his wife and Rajya Sabha member Sudha Murty.

Heat factor

The soaring mercury seemed to have had an impact. There was an initial rush in the morning, followed by thin crowds. The turnout picked up in the evening. The city recorded 35 degrees Celsius, while the Bengaluru Rural district had a forecast of 37 degrees Celsius.

Many booths saw long queues as early as 6.30 a.m., even before polling started at 7 a.m. "Those who are enthusiastic about voting, those who go for morning walks, and those working at private firms tend to vote first," a polling official in Sahakarnagar said.

Shubhranshu, a voter in Varthur, said he joined the queue at 8.30 a.m. and waited over three hours to cast his vote. Finally, he voted past 11.30 a.m. Asma Banu, a resident of Kempapura, Hebbal, said she stood in the queue at 8.03 a.m. and could vote only at 10.22 a.m.

Pranay Dubey, president of Electronics City Rising, said, "Many returned home due to the lengthy queues. Similar situations occurred during last year's Assembly polls also. The EC needs to enhance resources and streamline the voting process."

The city constituencies recorded nearly 20% turnout every four hours till 3 p.m. In Bengaluru Rural, turnout was 20.35% by 11 a.m., but it jumped to 49.62% by 3 p.m., an increase of nearly 30%, even as other city constituencies saw a jump of less than 20% during the same period.

In some places, voters were seen braving the heat and coming to vote in the afternoon. A Congress agent said many step out of their homes only after finishing their morning chores.

Several booths saw long queues past 4 p.m. "In the last two hours, we usually see an increase in turnout," a polling official in Rajajinagar said.

Voters standing in a queue at polling station number 281 in Nagadevnahalli at Bengaluru North Lok Sabha constituency on Friday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

How polling progressed in Bengaluru LS constituencies

Segments	9 a.m. 2024 (in %)	11 a.m. 2024 (in %)	1 p.m. 2024 (in %)	3 p.m. 2024 (in %)	5 p.m. 2024 (in %)	Final turnout 2024 (tentative) (in %)	Turnout in 2019 (in %)
Bengaluru Rural	8.39	20.35	36.09	49.62	61.78	67.29	64.90
Bengaluru North	8.64	19.78	32.25	41.12	50.04	54.42	54.66
Bengaluru Central	8.14	19.21	30.10	40.10	48.61	52.81	54.28
Bengaluru South	9.08	19.81	31.51	40.77	49.37	53.15	53.47

Lok Sabha elections 2024

Complaints of missing names, errors in voters' list resurface

A voter checking name in the list at Ramanagara in Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituency on Friday. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Some citizens who patiently waited in long queues to cast their votes for the Lok Sabha elections on Friday in Bengaluru were disheartened to find that their names were either absent or deleted from the electoral rolls – a problem that the city has reported in the previous elections too.

Citizens in Chickpet and Akkipet of Bengaluru Central constituency have alleged that hundreds of names were deleted from the voter list. "Last year during the Assembly election, our names were on the voters' list and we successfully voted. But, on Friday we came to the booth to vote and were shocked to find our names deleted without verification," a voter alleged.

"If there are six votes in a family, the names of three to four voters are deleted from the list," they said, claiming that names of more than a 100 people were deleted from the voters' list this time.

Sajjan Raj Mehta, trade activist said, "I feel in democracy, the basic right to vote denied illegally is a crime and citizen's right to vote needs to be provided at any cost if valid ID cards are available." Complaints of missing names from voters' lists surfaced in a polling booth in Indiranagar too, as a woman was seen making frantic calls and approaching the polling officials in a huff after she found that her mother's name had gone missing.

While such incidents were reported in the different areas of the city, citizens were frustrated with the lack of response from officials. "Each official we approached simply passed us on to some other officials. There seemed to be a reluctance to take ownership and address our concerns," said Punitha H., a resident of BTM Layout.

Additionally, there were cases where voters' names were misspelled, leading to lengthy waits as they sought rectification.

Missing votes and confusion

Political parties' failure to distribute voter slips in all areas led to confusion at some booths. Many turned up at the booths without knowing their part number. Some others didn't have EPIC cards, and most people only had Aadhaar cards. Agents of political parties had a tough time locating the part numbers of the voters based on their names, phone numbers or Aadhaar numbers.

First-time voters exercise their franchise with enthusiasm

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Several first-time voters participated in the Lok Sabha elections on Friday, exercising their constitutional rights with zeal and enthusiasm. There are 1,79,006 young voters in the four Bengaluru city constituencies alone.

For many of these young citizens, casting their vote for the first time was a moment of pride and responsibility. Speaking to *The Hindu*, several first-time voters shared their experiences and aspirations.

"I felt a sense of empowerment as I walked into the polling booth," said Priya Rao, a first-time voter from the Jayanagar constituency. "It was a surreal experience to finally have a say in shaping the future of our country. I chose candidates who I believe have a vision for a better Bengaluru and India," she added.

The sentiment was echoed by Richard Samuel, a BTM Layout resident who emphasised the importance of informed decision-making. "I researched each candidate's manifesto and track record before choosing. Our city faces numerous challenges, from traffic congestion to environmental degradation, and I voted for candidates who prioritize sustainable development and infrastructure improvement of the city," he said.

However, the excitement of casting their first vote was also tinged with a sense of urgency and expectation. Many first-time voters expressed their demands for accountable governance and tangible action on pressing issues.

"I want our elected representatives to listen to the youth and address our concerns," asserted Manavi Shankar, a resident from Malleshwaram. "We need policies that promote job creation, education reform, and women's safety. Our voices matter, and we expect our leaders to deliver on their promises," she said. In addition to their demands for responsive governance, first-time voters highlighted the need for transparency and integrity in the electoral process. "I was dismayed by the prevalence of misinformation and negative campaigning in this election. Our parents and elders have been flooded with misinformation on social media, especially on WhatsApp. The election commission should sort these issues out. As voters, we deserve honest and respectful discourse from our candidates. I hope future elections will be conducted with greater integrity and civility," said Sandeep Shenoy, a resident of Tilaknagar.

Shreya Patel from Koramangala emphasised her independent approach to voting, revealing that she made her decision without seeking advice or input from her parents, friends, and family. "Voting is not merely a right but a profound responsibility," she affirmed.

First-time voters after casting their votes at Chamarajpet in Bengaluru Central Lok Sabha consistency in Bengaluru on Friday. K. MURALI KUMAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Government of Telangana in exercise of powers conferred by Section (3) of commission of Inquiry Act. 1952 (Central Act No.60 of 1952), has appointed Hon'ble Justice Sri Pinaki Chandra Ghose, Former Judge of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. To conduct Inquiry on certain allegations of irregularities & embezzlement of public funds by corrupt practices in constructing of barrages of Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla Reservoirs of Kaleshwaram Project.

General Public is hereby informed that, they can submit their representations/allegations or grievances with evidence in the form of notarized sworn in affidavit only in sealed envelope. Any representation without evidence or without sworn in affidavit shall not be entertained by this commission. Sealed envelope can be put in sealed drop box in Office of Commission till **31st May, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** on working days in the Peshi of Hon'ble Commission, located in 8th floor, D-Block, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (BRKR) Bhavan, Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad-500063.

Any post can be mailed on address below:

Hon'ble **Justice Sri Pinaki Chandra Ghose,**
Former Judge of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India,
8th Floor, "D" Block, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (BRKR) Bhavan, Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad-500063.

Rahul Bojja, IAS,
Secretary,
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M BG-BGE

From Page One

14 segments in State see 69.23% voter turnout

A look at the turnout in two LS polls

Constituency	Turnout on April 26, 2024 (in %) (Tentative)	Turnout in 2019 (in %)
Udupi-Chikkamagaluru	76.06	75.91
Hassan	77.51	77.08
Dakshina Kannada	77.43	77.90
Chitradurga	73.11	70.65
Tumakuru	77.70	77.21
Mandya	81.48	80.23
Mysuru	70.45	69.28
Chamarajanagar	76.59	75.19
Bengaluru Rural	67.29	64.90
Bengaluru North	54.42	54.66
Bengaluru Central	52.81	54.28
Bengaluru South	53.15	53.47
Chickballapur	76.82	76.61
Kolar	78.07	77.11

While seven constituencies recorded a turnout of above 75%, the three constituencies of Bengaluru are the only ones to record less than 60% turnout.

Mandya, which is witnessing a mega clash between the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and Congress' Venkataramane Gowda ('Star Chandru'), had recorded the highest turnout in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and 2023 Assembly polls too. While this constituency had recorded 80.59% in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, it had seen a polling percentage of 84.75 in the Assembly elections last year. Bengaluru South which had recorded the lowest turnout of a little over 53% in the previous three elections (2018 Assembly, 2019 Lok Sabha, and 2023 Assembly) has maintained its polling percentage at 53.15%. However, Bengaluru Central has seen a dip in the turnout from 54.32% in 2019 to 52.81% this time.

Expressing helplessness, officials said it was unfortunate that urban voters had always been less enthusiastic about voting, despite several strategies adopted to increase the turnout.

Bengaluru Rural and Mysuru

Bengaluru Rural constituency and Mysuru – where the Election Commission had taken up 100% webcasting of the polls – recorded 67.29% and 70.45% turnout, respectively.

Timely CPR by doctor saves life of voter in J.P. Nagar

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

CPR was administered by Ganesh Srinivasa Prasad, a nephrologist at Narayana Health at a polling booth in Bengaluru. VIA X

Timely cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by a doctor saved the life of a woman who complained of giddiness before collapsing at a polling booth in Jumbo Savari Dinne at J.P. Nagar 8th Phase in Bengaluru on Friday.

The woman, in her mid-fifties, was standing in the queue to vote when she complained of giddiness. People tried to give her some water but she fainted just after taking two-three sips.

Ganesh Srinivasa Prasad, a nephrologist at Narayana Health, who did the CPR, told *The Hindu* that she could have collapsed due to low BP and heat.

"We gave her some water and tried to help her sit up, but she did not respond. She was gasping for breath and her eyes had rolled up. I could not detect any pulse and the peripherals were cold. I immediately started CPR and she was revived after one minute of the life-saving technique. Subsequently, the polling officials offered her some juice and called an ambulance. Apparently, she has a history of diabetes. Her sugar level was checked. It was normal. Perhaps, she collapsed due to low BP and heat that could have affected her heart functioning," he said.

The woman was standing in the queue to vote when she complained of giddiness

"As I was waiting in queue .... one lady had syncope and cardiac arrest in front of me. There was no pulse and I started immediate CPR ... luckily she got ROSC (Return of Spontaneous Circulation) within minutes," he said on X.

Syncope, also known as fainting or passing out, is a sudden, temporary loss of consciousness usually related to a drop in blood flow to the brain.

It typically results in a quick and complete recovery. There are various triggers and underlying causes for syncope.

Poll officials seize ₹4.8 cr. in Chickballapur segment, case booked against Sudhakar

A team led by Bengaluru Urban district Nodal Officer Munish Moudgil received a call about cash meant for distribution during the elections

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A flying squad of election officials seized cash amounting to ₹4.8 crore from a house in Yelahanka, coming under Chikkaballapur constituency, on Thursday. The officials booked a case against BJP candidate K. Sudhakar at Madanayakahalli police station.

According to the officials, a team of officials led by Bengaluru Urban district Nodal Officer Munish Moudgil received a call about cash meant for distribution and misuse in elections. The caller shared the GPS location of the property where the cash was allegedly kept.

K. Sudhakar

The Nodal Officer alerted the Income Tax Department, as per ECI directions. The property falls under Chikkaballapur parliamentary constituency and Yelahanka Assembly Segment. Hence, DEO Chikkaballapura was informed.

As per the details emerging from the investigation, officials are checking for violations of Model Code of Conduct

He was told to inform the Expenditure Observer too. Jurisdiction-wise, Yelahanka is in Bengaluru Urban district, but falls under Bengaluru Rural Superintendent of Police.

Flying Squad

The MCC Nodal Officer, a Flying Squad and Surveillance (FST) team, and a magistrate visited the spot.

As per ECI directions, Income Tax Department searched the premises. Cash amounting to about ₹5 crore was found.

As per the details emerging from the investigation, officials are checking for violations of the Model Code of Conduct and electoral offences.

Braving odds, senior citizens cast votes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Eighty-five-year-old Ningamma came in a wheelchair to a polling booth at Sathanur Hobli at around 2 p.m. in the scorching heat. Her grit to exercise her franchise inspired the youngsters.

Ms. Ningamma spoke to a few who approached her and even posed for the camera showing her inked finger.

When her son held her hand to keep it steady, she refused assistance. Talking to *The Hindu*, she said, "I recovered from a disease recently and was bedridden. As I can sit now, I decided to come out and vote." Upon asking why she did not register for vote-from-home, she said she would only be satisfied if she came out and voted.

Sugnanamurthy, 74, who is in frail health, came to the polling booth in Bagalur with the help of a walker and said that the Election Commission of India should consider providing vote from home facility to senior citizens even those below the age of 85. "I understand if they lower the age from 85, the government will have a large population who will vote from home to deal with. Maybe, instead of officials coming home to get our votes, people like me should be allowed to exercise our franchise through a postal ballot. It is an ordeal to come, stand in a queue here and vote," he said.

A 94-year-old retired Air Marshal P.V. Iyer came to a booth in Bengaluru city to vote. He was carried in a wheelchair by the polling staff to cast a vote.

Kumaraswamy and Shivakumar spar over 'guarantee cards'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/RAMANAGAR

Arch rivals Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, who are fighting for the Vokkaliga leadership, on Friday, entered into a bitter spat over the distribution of 'guarantee cards' by Congress in the intensely fought Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituency.

As the polling progressed in the constituency, where noted cardiologist and BJP candidate C.N. Manjunath is challenging D.K. Suresh, the incumbent Congress MP, the former Chief Minister accused the Congress of distributing guarantee cards at the midnight on Thursday to entice and induce voters. Displaying such cards, he alleged,

"In desperation of losing the election, cards containing serial numbers and QR codes which can be exchanged for household items worth ₹10,000 are being distributed. When our workers tried to prevent the distribution, they have been attacked."

Dismissing the allegation, Mr. Shivakumar said, "We have distributed guarantee cards with election promises of manifesto which is no inducement. But what cards are being distributed by Mr. Kumaraswamy and (RR Nagar MLA) Muniratna? Shall I show what BJP and JD (S) workers are distributing?" In Bengaluru Rural, the voters who received cards said the Congress workers distributed the cards at doorsteps to advertise that after the party was voted to power in the State, guarantee schemes were implemented. As the leaders sparred over the card, local workers on the ground were also seen engaging in heated arguments. At Kanakapura town when BJP workers alleged inducement, a Congress worker displaying the card on his hand said the card only talks about the guarantee schemes, and the QR code on it leads to the video of Congress candidate D.K. Suresh's appeal to voters.

BJP, Cong. workers clash outside polling booth in Sarjapur

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Tension prevailed for some time outside a polling booth in Sarjapur town near Bengaluru when activists of the BJP clashed with those of the Congress party. The police personnel at the spot intervened and pacified the two sides.

Trouble started when a group of BJP leaders came out of the booth and allegedly abused the Congress workers present outside. The Congress workers retaliated, leading to a heated argument.

The situation worsened when both the groups tried to attack each other.

But the police personnel posted at the booth summoned reinforcements and brought the situation under control. "The situation was handled efficiently by the police present at the spot," said Mallikarjuna Baladandi, Superintendent of Police, Bengaluru district. No complaint has been filed so far.

BJP workers alleged that rowdy-sheeter, identified as Seena, assaulted their workers. He allegedly ransacked their tables and chairs put up outside booths 79, 80, 81 and 82 in Sarjapur town.

Manjunath's name misspelled

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Noted cardiologist and BJP candidate for Bengaluru Rural C.N. Manjunath's name was wrongly spelled as 'Dr. C.S. Manjunatha' at one of the polling stations in the constituency. At a display board in one of the polling stations in RR Nagar, Manjunath's name was wrongly spelled 'Dr. C.S. Manjunatha'.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of the general public that my client **Mrs. Jasmine Jeromica,** D/o Mr. Zachariah Residing at No. 284, Austin Town, 5th Square, Bangalore 560 047 has negotiated to purchase the schedule mentioned property from the owner Mrs. Lucy D'Souza W/o. Rymond D'Souza and D/O Late LC. Davis, Residing at No 28, Austin Town, 3rd Block, Anglo Indian Quarters, Bangalore 560 047, any person having objection in the said sale transaction may file their objection before the undersigned advocate within seven days from the date of this notice failing which the transaction shall be completed.

SCHEDULE

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The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
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Notice is hereby given that, **SRI. SIDDAPPA** s/o Late. Rangappa is the absolute owner of property described in the Schedule hereunder.

It is brought to the notice of the general public that, our client has negotiated and decided to develop the Schedule Property with the above said owner on joint development basis. Any persons having any claim against or to the Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to sell, G.P.A, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange, possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office **within 15 days from the date of publication hereof**, failing which our client shall proceed without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, will be considered as waived.

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Dated this 27th day of April 2024 at Bangalore

M/S. LEGAL NEXUS,
ADVOCATES & CONSULTANTS,
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Tender Notice No.	Item Sl. No	Tender Number/ due Date	Item	Field Name	Existing	Read As
E-04/ 2024	46	44240613/ 19/04/2024	K-TYPE COMPOSITION BRAKE BLOC	CLOSING DATE/TIME	19/04/2024 - 14.30	03/05/2024 - 14.30
E-04/ 2024	44	04240526/ 19/04/2024	PUSH TYPE FLUSHING VALVE	CLOSING DATE/TIME	19/04/2024 - 14.30	03/05/2024 - 14.30

Principal Chief Materials Manager

Man in Kunigal ends life, relatives allege assault by Congress workers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 56-year-old man from Kichavadi village in Kunigal allegedly ended his life in an inebriated state in the wee hours of Friday.

The deceased, identified as Chandrashekhar, climbed up a water tank and threatened to jump while family members, villagers, and police reached the spot to convince him to come down. However, a few minutes later, he ended his life, said the police. He was rushed to Kunigal hospital where he was declared as brought dead.

The police have taken up a case of unnatural death and are investigating. However, the family members of the deceased alleged that Chandrashekhar was assaulted by Congress party workers for supporting the BJP, which led him to take the extreme step. The family alleged that Congress workers assaulted and humiliated him threatening him with dire consequences and even said that they would ensure that he would be sacked from the job. But the police said that the family members did not file any complaint in this regard.

Considering the sensitivity of the case, additional deployment was made with a platoon of KSRP at the Kunigal hospital and another platoon in the village to ensure a smooth election process, a senior police officer said.

(Those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahaya Vahi ph no. 104 for help)

Timings
BENGALURU

SATURDAY, APR. 27		
RISE	06:01	SET 18:34
RISE	21:41	SET 08:15
SUNDAY, APR. 28		
RISE	06:00	SET 18:34
RISE	22:39	SET 09:09
MONDAY, APR. 29		
RISE	06:00	SET 18:34
RISE	23:36	SET 10:07

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	37	26
Mysuru	37	24
Bengaluru	37	25

Bengaluru Today
37°C Weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night also will be comfortable.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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1) Last date of sale of tender document: **25.04.2024 at 05:00PM to 10.05.2024 at 05:00 PM**.
2) Last Date of submission of bid Document: **25.04.2024 at 06:00PM to 10.05.2024 at 06:00 PM.**
3) The date of opening of tender : **30.04.2024 at 05:00 PM to 15.05.2024 at 05:00 PM**.

The amended clauses of above tenders may be downloaded from website http:jharkhandtenders.gov.in and www.jbvnl.co.in from 26.04.2024. Further details against the above tenders can be obtained from website http:jharkhandtenders.gov.in and may be contacted on Mobile No. 8709711244/7004815844, NIC helpline No. 0651-2400178. Submission of Bid document fee and EMD will be accepted through online mode only and it's receipt should be submitted to the office of undersigned on or before 10.05.2024.

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THE HINDU

DESIGN

Building to beat the heat

On World Design Day, a look at the integration of kindness-centric designs that emphasise the fusion of shade, rest, and water as essential elements for extreme summers

Sanjay Bhardwaj

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Various urban elements, from construction materials to transportation fuels, create 'hot' cities, amplifying temperatures by several degrees compared to rural areas. The India Meteorological Department has warned of a scorching summer this year with more than the usual number of heatwave days. Some places are likely to face maximum temperatures crossing 40 degrees Celsius. In response, effective strategies for heat management are imperative, necessitating a multifaceted approach encompassing sustainable urban planning, infrastructure development, and public engagement. One crucial aspect gaining traction is the integration of kindness-centric designs aimed at cooling our cities and prioritising human comfort and well-being.

Vertical gardens

Green infrastructure emerges as a powerful tool in combating urban heat islands, creating cooler microclimates, and fostering communities. Planting trees along the streets and integrating green-blue corridors within urban planning are tangible steps towards this goal.

An example is Singapore's Gardens by the Bay, a vast green space integrated with sustainable technology to cool the surrounding area. The Gardens by the Bay features Supertrees, towering vertical gardens that provide shade, harness solar energy, and collect rainwater, showcasing an innovative approach to combating heat while promoting biodiversity and creating a powerful social node.

Recharging groundwater

Waterbodies act as natural heat sinks, while contributing significantly to groundwater replenishment. In India, the tradition of *baolis*, ancient stepwells, offers a timeless solution for summer relief. These architectural wonders not only recharge groundwater but also provide natural cooling during summers, showcasing a sustainable approach deeply ingrained in Indian heritage. Additionally, serving as social centres, *baolis* historically brought communities together, fostering connections and providing respite from the heat in more ways than one. Through rainwater harvesting, the creation of artificial ponds, and the rejuvenation of existing waterbodies, we can help create cooling zones within neighbourhoods.

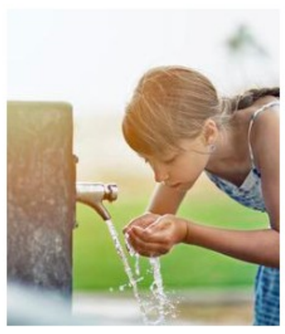
At a masterplanning level, the allocation of surface area for built zones and open spaces should be based on the water's percolation potential, aiming to maximise local water conservation efforts. Drawing inspiration from traditional Indian *baolis*, modern infrastructure can incorporate water features and vegetation as heat sinks in urban areas.

The rejuvenation of Rajokri waterbody in New Delhi is a remarkable example of effective water management. The lake was revived through the scientific wetland system, improving water quality, promoting groundwater recharge, and acting as a buffer against flooding. The project also included landscaping for public gatherings, creating green play areas, and constructing rain gardens to prevent flooding and enhance water availability for local needs.

Another important city-level change that must be implemented is the development of public transportation networks. Efficient urban planning can reduce the number of private vehicles on the road. This decreases traffic congestion and lowers vehicle heat emissions, improving air quality and reducing urban temperatures. By promoting shared infrastructure and encouraging active modes of transportation, we can combat heat and nurture a sense of community and connectivity among residents.

Curitiba, Brazil, is a model city known for its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, which reduces the reliance on private vehicles and mitigates heat-related issues. The system's efficient design, dedicated lanes, and frequent service reduce heat emissions and encourage public transport usage, contributing to a cooler and more sustainable urban environment at the neighbourhood level.

One of the most iconic and thoughtful design elements in traditional Indian towns is the 'pyau', or drinking water utility. Nestled in busy streets, religious sites, and public buildings, these humble structures not only quench thirst but also offer respite from the relentless heat. However, their presence has dwindled in contemporary urban landscapes. Reviving such amenities aligns with the ethos of kindness-centric design, emphasising the fusion of shade, rest, and water as essential elements for heat stress relief.



As part of Swachh Bharat Mission, the construction of toilets along large public building boundaries, presents an opportunity to expand this concept further. Instead of mere functional blocks, envisioning these spaces as small verandahs with drinking water facilities can transform them into welcoming havens for weary city dwellers also working as gathering points within the area, promoting social interaction and cohesion.

Automated shading systems

At an individual level, conscious steps towards heat resilience can help achieve larger-scale initiatives. Traditional Indian architecture features *chajjas* (projecting eaves) and *jaalis* (perforated screens) that promote natural ventilation and shade, reducing heat gain in buildings. Incorporating balconies and terraces eases the transition between indoors and outdoors while protecting the interiors from direct heat gain.

Dynamic elements, such as sun-tracking panels or automated shading systems, take facade design to the next level by responding to environmental conditions in real-time. These systems adjust the angle or position of louvres, shades, or panels based on factors like sunlight intensity, wind direction, and outdoor temperature. Shading devices, such as awnings, canopies, and fins, are another integral part of modern facade systems. These devices are designed to cast shadows and provide shade to building surfaces, windows, and outdoor spaces. Ensuring sufficient shading around the properties helps avoid external heat generated by air conditioning units.

Another impactful measure is to consider installing green roofs, which provide insulation and reduce stormwater runoff, contributing to significantly lower indoor temperatures. Individuals can also contribute by incorporating small water features or drinking water facilities at private boundary walls, offering a refreshing respite and creating a more compassionate urban environment.

The writer is Partner at team3.

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BG-BGE

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and his brother D.K. Suresh after casting their votes on Friday. ANI

JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda arriving to exercise his franchise at a polling booth at Paduvalahippe village in Holenarsipur taluk. ANI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman after casting her vote in Bengaluru. PTI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his son Yathindra cast their votes at Siddaramanahundi in Varuna Assembly constituency. M.A. SRIRAM

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressing an election rally in Ballari district on Friday. PTI

BJP will destroy the Constitution if voted back to power: Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI/KALABURAGI

Congress leader and MP Rahul Gandhi has said that the BJP will "destroy the Constitution" if it comes back to power. He was addressing an election campaign in Vijayapura.

"Several BJP leaders have been talking about finishing off the Constitution, or changing it, or having a new one in its place. They say that provisions of the Constitutions are to be blamed for the problems of today. This clearly shows that the BJP will end the Constitution as we know it if it is voted back to power," he said.

What Constitution gave us

"We should not forget that people have got all their rights from the Constitution. Before that, rajas and maharajas used to rule India. Today, if the common people, the poor, the Dalits, the tribals have a voice, it is because of our Constitution. We have to protect it at all cost," he said. "The people of this country have a choice."

"Mr. Modi has turned some people into billionaires in 10 years, while the poor got nothing. Most of wealth of India is held by just around 20 people. Mr. Modi's government has transferred airports, energy companies, and national resources to Gautam Adani's company, and other big corporates," he said, claiming that the Congress, on the other hand, was with the poor. "While Mr. Modi is making a few people crorepatis, we want to make crores of people lakhpatis."

He said while Mr. Modi has gone around saying that Karnataka would go bankrupt due to the guarantee schemes, they have been proved wrong.

Speaking at Ballari, Mr. Gandhi picked on the *chembu* (empty pot) metaphor that the Congress has been employing to allege that the Centre has given nothing to the State.

He said Karnataka got only ₹13 back for every ₹100 it contributed to the Union government in the form of tax. The "Union government was supposed to give ₹18,000 for drought relief. Instead it has given empty *chembu*," Mr. Gandhi said.

Some villages boycott polls

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Boycott of polls or threats to boycott over local issues were reported in multiple places as polling was under way on Friday.

Villagers in Begli Benagenahalli in Kolar Lok Sabha constituency announced boycott of polls over a local issue of the government permitting a bar in the village despite protests. Voters in Siddapura village in Chitradurga constituency boycotted over the demand to include their village in mining-affected areas not being met. In Devikunti village, coming under Chickballapur constituency, voters demanding proper roads announced the boycott of polls. Boycott by Indiganatha village in Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency led to violence with villagers damaging poll material.

With votes in EVMs for 14 constituencies, focus now shifts to NK for May 7 polls

Now, the turf war for BJP and Congress will be Bombay Karnataka and Kalyana Karnataka where Veerashaiva-Lingayats dominate political narratives

BATTLE READY

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

With the high-pitched battles in the South Karnataka's Vokkaliga-dominated Old Mysore constituencies and the coastal constituencies coming to an end on Friday, the battleground will now shift to North and Central Karnataka regions that will go into polling on May 7 as part of the third phase.

After the State witnessed closely fought contests in Mandya, Hassan, and Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituencies where high-profile contestants, including former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, Prajwal Revanna, and D.K. Suresh were involved, the turf war for the BJP and the Congress will be in Bombay Karnataka and Kalyana Karnataka regions where the land owning Veerashaiva-Lingayats dominate the political narratives. The BJP, which draws its strength from the support of Veerashaiva-Lingayats, currently holds all the 14 constituencies.

Importantly, while the JD(S) was a key player in South Karnataka, it has a limited influence in North Karnataka barring a few pockets of Kalyana Karnataka region.

What parties claim

Of the 14 constituencies in South Karnataka that went into polls, the Congress would win 10 seats, up from one in 2019, party president and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar claimed, post the elections. He also claimed that the Congress would win another 10 seats out of 14 in North Karnataka, echoing similar sentiments aired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who said that there was no "Modi wave." Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok claimed that the NDA would win 12 out of 14 seats based on the "image of Narendra Modi" and failure of the Congress government in Karnataka.

However, sources in JD (S), which is in alliance with the BJP, indicated that the alliance could win eight to 10 seats in the first phase, while conceding that the Congress has put up a formidable fight on the ground, making the poll prospects calculation difficult in several constituencies. Sources also conceded that the squabbling within the saffron party in multiple constituencies were evident on ground during campaigning and have brought headaches to the candidates.

Voters queue up to cast their ballots outside a polling station during voting for the Lok Sabha elections in Bengaluru on Friday. AFP

Internal squabbles

The situation is no different for the BJP in some constituencies in North Karnataka where internal squabbling has hit headlines. The rumblings may have come down but the undercurrents could have a negative impact on the party that has dominated the political space in the region for over a decade. Among the big names in the fray include two former Chief Ministers Basavaraj Bommai (Haveri) and Jagadish Shettar (Belagavi), Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi (Dharwad) and Bhagawant Khuba (Bidar).

Like in South Karnataka, where the Congress seems to have succeeded in driving home the guarantee narratives among large number of caste groups and the economically weaker sections as a challenge to the BJP's election strategy of pushing the Mr. Modi's Hindutva and development agenda, the parties are likely to up the ante on similar lines in the North Karnataka too.

While all eyes are on the way the Veerashaiva-Lingayats votes would sway, the votes of most backward classes seem to be important. Here the Congress is hoping for complete consolidation of Kuruba and Muslim votes. Besides caste calculations, Hindutva rhetoric, Congress government guarantees, 'Modi ki guarantee', and 'step motherly' attitude of the Centre narrative playing out, the drought conditions could also impact poll outcome in this region marked by vast areas of dry, arid lands.

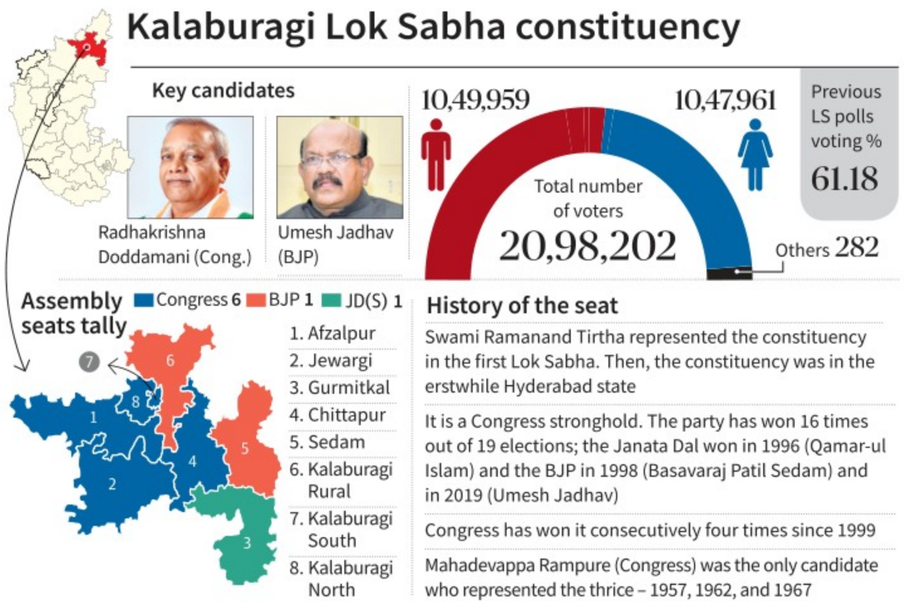
Kharge on a mission to reclaim lost territory

Kumar Buradikatti
KALABURAGI

After winning 11 general elections in a row (nine Assembly elections and two Lok Sabha elections), Congress veteran M. Mallikarjun Kharge suffered a massive defeat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He was beaten on his home turf by his loyal follower-turned-rival Umesh Jadhav, BJP candidate, by a margin of 95,452 votes. It was his first electoral defeat in 47 years of political journey since 1972.

Five years down the line, Mr. Kharge, the man seen as having played a key role in special status to the region under Article 371(J) of the Constitution, is this time campaigning for his son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani. It is a high-stakes battle for him as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and the president of the All India Congress Committee. Mr. Doddamani is pitted against Mr. Jadhav who is recontesting from this reserved segment.

Having six MLAs in the eight Assembly segments in Kalaburagi Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress is relatively in a better condition. While the Congress is riding on the development initiatives of Mr. Kharge and the government's guarantee schemes locally, the BJP is, as in 2019, heavily banking on the "Modi wave" and "Modi ki guarantee", besides the aggressive Hindutva plank.



Past results

	Winner	Votes vote share	Runner-up	Votes vote share	Third place	Votes vote share	BJP+JD(S) votes-vote share
2014	Mallikarjun Kharge (cong.)	5,07,193 **50.82%**	Revu Naik Belamagi (BJP)	4,32,460 **43.33%**	D.G. Sagar (JD-S)	15,690 **1.57%**	4,48,150 **44.92%**
2019	Umesh Jadhav (BJP)	6,20,192 **52.1 %**	Mallikarjun Kharge (Cong.)	5,24,740 **44.08%**	K. B. Vasu (BSP)	10,865 **0.56%**	JD(S) supported Congress

The Congress is projecting itself as the champion of the region's development by showing a bunch of its past achievements in the region such as the ESIC Hospital in Kalaburagi, Central University of Karnataka, Rail Coach Factory, airport in Kalaburagi, announcement of the new Railway Division and National Investment and Manufacturing Zone for Kalaburagi, branch of Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences in Kalaburagi, and more, apart from Article 371(J) which has brought in resources for regional development and reservations in education and employment.

The rejection of special status to Kalyana Karnataka under Article 371(J) by the then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani during the BJP-led NDA regime in 1999 continues to haunt the BJP. It was conceded in 2012 under UPA, which is regarded as a feather in the cap of Mr. Kharge.

The BJP is going strong on the Hindutva card, branding its adversary as "pro-Muslim" and also talking of a couple of new trains, including a Vande Bharat Express from Kalaburagi, as its achievements. Mr. Jadhav is hoping to ride on the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In terms of castes, Kolis (Kabbaligas), one of the major communities that can influence the poll result in the Kalaburagi constituency, is upset with the BJP. The party had, on the promise of including the community in the Scheduled Tribes list, grabbed Baburao Chinchanasur, a prominent Koli/Kabbaliga leader, from the Congress.

Mr. Chinchansur played a crucial role in channelising his community votes in favour of the BJP and defeating Mr. Kharge in the last election. After the BJP failed to fulfil its promise, Mr. Chinchansur is now back in the Congress.

Former Minister Malikayya Guttedar, who had also quit the Congress and joined the BJP to play a role in defeating Mr. Kharge, is also back in the Congress now. His homecoming could help get a significant lead for the Congress in the Afzalpur Assembly segment - where Mr. Jadhav had grabbed over 35,000 more votes than Mr. Kharge in the last elections.

However, Lambani voters are expected to back their community leader Mr. Jadhav and SC (Right) are likely to support their leader Mr. Doddamani. Relatively, the Lambanis are a smaller community with around one lakh electors compared to the latter, which has around 2.5 lakh electors. With prominent Lambani leaders like Revu Naik Belamagi and Subhash Rathod in its fold, the Congress is hoping to grab a sizable chunk of Lambani votes too. Both the BJP and the Congress share SC (Left) votes, which are around 1.5 lakh.

Lingayats are the largest community with around five lakh voters and the BJP is heavily banking on it. Kurubas is the second largest community with around three lakh voters and the Congress is likely to be the main claimant because of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Muslims and Koli/Kabbaligas are the third largest with around 2.5 lakh voters each and the Congress is hoping to get a lion's share here.

JD(S) didn't invite me to campaign in Mandya, says Sumalatha

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Expressing displeasure over remarks of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, Mandya MP Sumalatha Ambareesh on Friday said no one from the JD(S) invited her to campaign for the party candidate H.D. Kumaraswamy in Mandya.

"Neither me nor my supporters were contacted by any leader from JD(S) for campaigning," she said.

Speaking to reporters after casting her vote at Doddarasinakere village in Maddur taluk of Mandya, she said Mr. Kumaraswamy, after the meeting at her residence before the elections, did not contact her for campaign. "Had the party invited me, I would have campaigned in Mandya," she said.

She said somebody must have given wrong information to Mr. Deve Gowda that she deliberately did not campaign for Mr. Kumaraswamy. "I sacrificed the seat to see Narendra Modi become the PM for the third time. But a different message is being represented about me in Mandya," she said.

Mr. Kumaraswamy, however, said he had requested Ms. Sumalatha to campaign for him at least for two days in Mandya when he met her during Mr. Modi's rally in Mysuru.

Jayarajan puts LDF in a spot on election day

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Hot topic: E.P. Jayarajan's meeting with Prakash Javadekar, right, has kicked up a controversy among political parties in Kerala.

Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener E.P. Jayarajan appeared to have put the ruling front in Kerala in a spot on polling day after he admitted somewhat ill-timely that he had met BJP's Kerala in-charge Prakash Javadekar in the company of self-styled power broker T.G. Nandakumar.

The Congress seized on the "disclosure" to supercharge its election-day campaign that the LDF was in a tacit alliance with the BJP to disadvantage the UDF in Kerala.

Signs of exasperation seemed to emanate from the top CPI(M) leadership.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan stated that Mr. Jayarajan's geniality often caused the latter to lose guard. Mr. Vijayan seemed to take exception to Mr. Nandakumar's presence at the interaction. He said persons who innocently entertained money-minded malefactors risked adverse political optics.

Mr. Vijayan did not see any fault in rival politicians being civil to each other. "I have interacted with Mr. Javadekar at some public venues. Being civil is not a crime."

Mr. Vijayan depicted the vilification campaign against Mr. Jayarajan as an attack on the LDF. He said it was the offspring of a Congress-BJP-media cabal. CPI(M) State Secretary M.V. Govindan echoed a similar sentiment.

However, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan refused to buy Mr. Jayarajan's explanation that Mr. Javadekar and Mr. Nandakumar had invited themselves over, and the group discussed no politics.

He said the tête-à-tête had drawn the curtains back on the CPI(M)-BJP nexus.

"It was no impromptu social call. Mr Vijayan had authorised the secret meeting," he said.

Mr. Satheesan said Mr. Vijayan had thrown Mr. Jayarajan under the bus to save face. "Mr. Vijayan had pre-emptively scapegoated Mr. Jayarajan to evade the onus of a crippling defeat at the hustings," he said. Mr. Javadekar, however, refused to comment.

The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling in Karnataka from today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 22nd edition of The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling 2024 will be held at 12 locations in Karnataka from April 27.

The event will provide guidance on the UPSC exam, CET counselling, and NEET Counselling from the Karnataka Examination Authority while also providing career guidance on courses in Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Fashion Designing, Journalism, Animation, Performing Arts, Management, Engineering, Medicine, and Architecture.

During the event, students and parents will be able to connect with experts and educational institutions.

Registrations

Registration will be between 9 a.m. and 9.30 a.m, and the event from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Platinum Sponsor is Presidency University and Reva University.

Gold Sponsors are Gitam University, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, RV University, SRM University AP, Mahindra University, Hindustan Group of Institutions Chennai, and Cambridge Institute of Technology.

Silver Sponsors are Christ University, JSS Science & Technology University, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, Indian Institute of Fashion Technology, Soundarya Institutions, SRM IST Ramapuram Campus, Chanakya University, CMR University, East Point Group of Institution, Karnataka State Open University, Malnad College of Engineering, IIBS, Kammavari Sangha Institute of Technology, St Joseph Engineering College, and Praxis Tech School.

Associate Sponsors are SDM Dharwad, Shaheen Independent PU College, Khaja Bandanawaz University, Sharnbasva University, KLE Technological University, Visvesvaraya Technological University, BLDE Association Vijayapura, Karnataka Bank, Navkis College of Engineering.

Regional Sponsor is Parivarthana Business School.

Further details

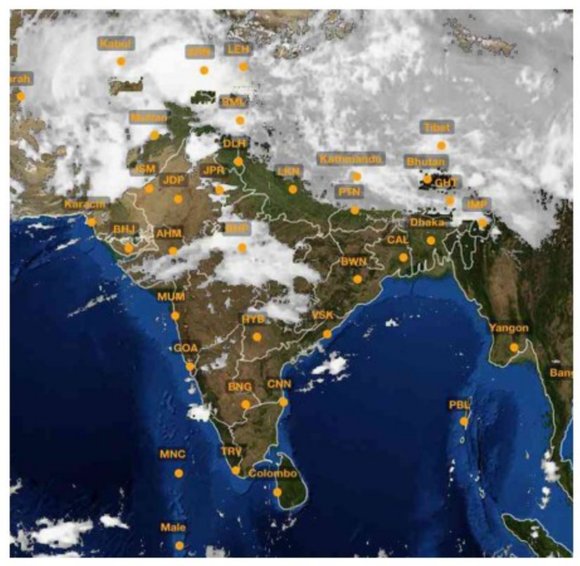
For details, contact: 9845095781 / 9448160126 / 9448871815. Entry is free. All participating students will get career counselling book free.

The Hindu EducationPlus Career Counselling 2024

Place	Date	Venue	Address
Bengaluru South	27/04/2024	Mangala Mantapa Auditorium NMKRV College	22nd Cross, Jayanagar 3rd Block, Bengaluru
Hubballi	27/04/2024	K.L.E. Society's Biotechnology Auditorium	B.V.B. College of Engineering & Technology Campus, Vidyanagar, Hubballi
Ballari	27/04/2024	Basavarajeswari Public School & College	Anantapur Road, Ballari
Davangere	28/04/2024	Bapuji B School	Lakeview Campus, S.S. Layout, Shamanur Road
Mangaluru	11/05/2024	Geetha S.M. Shetty Hall	Ramakrishna College, Bunts Hostel Circle, Mangaluru
Bengaluru Central	11/05/2024	Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College of Science, Arts and Commerce	9, Race Course Road, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru
Raichur	11/05/2024	Navodaya Institute of Technology Auditorium	Navodaya Nagar, Bijanagera Road, Raichur
Mysuru	11/05/2024	Sahukar Chennaiah Auditorium	Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, P.B. No. 206, Gokulam III Stage, Mysuru
Vijayapura	11/05/2024	BLDECET	BLDEA's V.P. Dr. P.G. Halakatti College of Engineering and Technology, Ashram Road, Adarsh Nagar
Bidar	18/05/2024	Sri Poojya Channa Basava Pattadevaru Rang Mandir	Near district stadium, Bidar
Tumakuru	19/05/2024	Birla Auditorium	Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumakuru
Kalaburagi	19/05/2024	Poojya Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan	Poojay Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan, Sharana Basava University, Kalaburagi

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.8	27.8	Kozhikode	—	37.5	29.2
Ahmedabad	—	39.7	27.7	Kurnool	—	44.0	28.0
Aizawl	—	—	21.7	Lucknow	—	42.0	23.4
Allahabad	—	44.2	24.6	Madurai	—	39.2	26.1
Bengaluru	—	37.4	24.4	Mangaluru	—	35.5	26.5
Bhopal	—	35.0	25.6	Mumbai	—	35.5	26.4
Bhubaneswar	—	40.5	27.4	Mysuru	—	35.0	21.0
Chandigarh	—	40.2	20.6	New Delhi	—	40.5	21.6
Chennai	—	35.4	27.7	Patna	—	42.2	26.6
Coimbatore	—	39.2	26.8	Port Blair	—	33.7	27.1
Dehradun	—	38.0	19.1	Puducherry	—	34.6	27.2
Gangtok	—	22.6	15.3	Pune	—	40.2	25.8
Goa	—	33.8	25.5	Raipur	—	41.6	26.6
Guwahati	—	36.8	23.2	Ranchi	—	39.6	22.4
Hubballi	—	38.0	24.0	Shillong	—	28.1	16.5
Hyderabad	—	42.3	26.3	Shimla	—	29.6	15.5
Imphal	5	32.1	18.5	Srinagar	—	23.0	10.5
Jaipur	—	39.2	27.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.7	26.7
Kochi	—	33.8	28.8	Tiruchi	—	40.1	27.4
Kohima	—	25.8	17.4	Vijayawada	—	41.2	28.2
Kolkata	—	40.2	29.6	Visakhapatnam	—	34.4	28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.12	.79	.97	94	105	
Bengaluru	.12	.17	.40	106	109	
Chennai	.7	9	100	52	53	
Delhi	.41	120	.69	224	252	
Hyderabad	.19	.28	.32	106	94	
Kolkata	.14	.20	.56	73	94	
Lucknow	.5	.52	.28	216	139	
Mumbai	.25	.76	.24	98	169	
Pune	.95	108	116	70	71	
Visakhapatnam	.14	.52	.21	43	90	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Gurugram, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 291 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 33

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

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94140-93674, 94141-87874, 99832-55813
Remunerations as per candidates experience and ability

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 73rd ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH 74)
O.S. NO. 26099/2023

BETWEEN :
M/S. ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder Mr. Pramodh G.
Aged about 48 years
S/o Guru Mallappa
...PLAINTIFF

AND:
1. MR. GODUGUNOORI KOTIREDDY
S/o. Subba Reddy
Godugunoori, Aged about 39 Years, Larsen and Toubro Infotech Ltd., Gopalan Global Axis ITPL Road, White Filed, Bangalore- 560 066.
...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs.13,81,482.98 (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Eighty One Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Two paisa Ninety Eight Only)** apart from future interest of 24% p.a., in **O.S. No. 26099/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 73**, Before 73rd Addl. City Civil Court, Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **03rd Day of June, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Ex-parte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **22th** day of **April, 2024.**

By the order of Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & Co.
ADVOCATES
New No. 99, Old No. 11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 72nd ADDI. CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH 73)
O.S. NO.26102/2023

BETWEEN:
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder Mr. Pramodh. G
Aged about 48 years
S/o Guru Mallappa
...PLAINTIFF

AND:
1. MR. UMESH. G
S/o. Ganapathy Naidu,
Aged about 50 years,
No. 24, "F" Cross, 1st Main, New Avalahalli Extension Bytarayanapura
Bangalore- 560 026.
...DEFENDANT

Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs.2,56,930.41/- (Rupees Two Lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty and paisa Forty Only)** apart from future interest of 24% p.a., in **O.S. No. 26102/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 73**, Before 72nd Addl., City Civil Court. Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **10th Day of June, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Ex-parte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the 20th day of April, 2024.

By the order of Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayohall
BENGALURU- 560001

FX & Co.
ADVOCATES
New No. 99, Old No. 11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560005

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL & SESSION JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-57)
ORIGINAL SUIT NO. 6927 OF 2022

BETWEEN :
ICICI Bank Ltd.
A body corporate incorporated and registered under the Indian Companies Act 1956 and licensed as a Bank under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having Registered Office at: "Landmark", Race Course Circle, Vadodara - 390 007. And having its Regional office at ICICI Bank Ltd., 11th Floor, C-Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. And represented by its POA Holder Mr. M. Rohit Ali, S/o. Ishrath Ali M.
Aged about 26 years,
...PLAINTIFF

AND :
Mr. Mahaneesh Chandra
S/o. Mahadevappa,
Aged about 34 years,
R/a. No. PGF008, Legend Ornate Apartments,
Next to Golden Mart,
Near Devarachikkanahalli, Hongasandra, Bengaluru-560 068.
...DEFENDANT

Summons/ Notice through Paper Publication

Mr. Mahaneesh Chandra
S/o. Mahadevappa,
Aged about 34 years,
R/a. No. PGF008, Legend Ornate Apartments, Next to Golden Mart, Near Devarachikkanahalli, Hongasandra, Bengaluru-560 068.
...DEFENDANT

WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff has instituted case against you for recovery loan amount ₹5,24,209/- together with interest at the rate 18% p.a. from date of due to till the date of realization.
You are hereby summoned to appear before this Hon'ble City Civil & Session Judge Court, (CCH-57), At Bengaluru, in person or by a Advocate/ Pleader on 14/06/2024 at 11:00 A.M. answer the questions of the same. Failing which the matter will be heard and determined as **"EX-PARTE".**
Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this **20th** day of **April, 2024.**

By order of the court
Assistant Registrar,
City Civil Court
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
Mr. K.N. Arvinda Navada
Advocate,
No.177/1, (88), 1st Floor, Besides 12th Cross, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bengaluru-560 002.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

AFFIDAVIT

I, **C.P.PUSHPAVATHY** Spouse of C.K.Ponnappa, residing at No.207, Karthikeya, 4th B Main, OMBR Layout, Banaswadi, Bangalore, hereby confirm that in Pension Certificate my name was mentioned as **PUSHPA PONNAPPA** and in other records such as Aadhaar, Bank Pass Book etc., my name was mentioned as **Choundira Ponnappa Pushpavathy / C.P.Pushpavathy** and as per Affidavit dated 24.04.2024 (Vide E-Stamp Certificate No.IN-KA89273080824740W), I confirmed that **CHOUNDIRA PONNAPPA PUSHPAVATHY, C.P.PUSHPAVATHY and PUSHPA PONNAPPA** pertains to me and belongs to me only and sworn before VII Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Bangalore.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I **SUNANDA** CHOWDHURY W/o Anup Chowdhury R/o Natura Phase – 2 Villa No – 15 Sy No 99 Chambenahhali Sarjapur Road Dommasand Dommasandra Bengaluru Karnataka 562125 have changed my name to SUNANDA ROY CHOWDHURY.

I, **ABI** Joy, D/o K Ganapathi A Glory, R/a No-23/2, 2nd Cross, Banaswadi Main Road, Maruthi Sevanagar Post, Bengaluru-560033 have changed my name to K Abijoy vide affidavit dt: 12.03.2024 sworn before Notary Udaykumar.K, B'luru.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MOHAN** Kumar K N, S/o. Ninge Gowda Kyathanahalli Mayi Gowda, R/a No-263, mms 19th Cross, 1st Main, Maruthinagara, Near SVS Public School, Ullalu, Bengaluru-560056 have changed my name to Mohan Kumar vide affidavit dt: 26.04.2024 sworn before Notary K.Venkateshan, B'lore

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No.Y/E.29/2024-25/07
Dated: 18-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
(1) Bajakere (BAJE) Provision of HL PF for 250 mtr, Platform shelter and other amenities at PF 1 of Bajakere Halt. **(2)** Kaniyoor (KNYR) - Provision of HL PF for 250 m, PF shelter and other amenities at PF 1 of Kaniyoor Halt Station. **(3)** Kodimbala- Provision of High Level Platform for 250 Meters, Platform shelter and other amenities at PF-1 of Kodimbala Halt. **(4)** Narimogaru Provision of High Level Platform for 250 Meters, Platform shelter and other amenities at PF-1 and PF-2 of Narimogaru Railway Station. **(5)** Yedamangala - Provision of High Level Platform for 250 Meters, platform shelter and other amenities at PF-1 and PF-2 of Yedamangala Railway Station. **(6)** Extension of PF-1 to 530 m, 180 sqms of low cost PF shelter, resurfacing of existing PF surface, water pedestals and seating arrangements at Challakere.	Rs. 33,26,905/-

Last date for submission of bids :
Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 10-05-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer
PUB/33/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Mysuru**
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No. 03 UBL 2024-25
Dated: 22-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.	Name of work	Approx. Value
1	**Hubballi Division :** **Sub Work:I)** - Repairs to PVC storage tank in Golf Link Colony, Hubballi. **Sub Work:II)** - Repairs to out side painting of Railway Quarters in New Vidyaranya Nagar and Quarters in Deshapande Nagar Colonies Hubballi. **Sub Work:III)** - Hubballi - Repairs to Railway Quarters by carrying out outside painting at Vinobha Nagar, Vibrant Road Colony and Old Hospital Compound. **Sub Work:IV)**- Hubballi - Repairs to Railway English Medium School by providing roof sheeting, improviding Play Ground circulating area and other miscellanceous	Rs. 1,58,16,193/-
2	**Hubballi Division :** Maintenance of Lawn and Garden at Hubballi for the period of 24 Months. **Sub Work:I)** Maintenance to the Lawn and Garden service building (DRM Office, Rail Soudha, DRM Camp Office, GM Camp Office, Railway Station area, Railway Hospital Railway Officers Club, Railway Museum, VVIP Rest House and at Mazdoor Udyan, Gadag Road) for the period of 24 Months. **Sub Work:II)** - Hubballi maintenance of Lawn and Garden at Colonies Hubballi (Golf Link Officers Colony, Keshwapur Colony, Colony Behind Railway Hospital, Rail Nagar Colony, Vinobha Nagar Colony, Down Chawal, Vallabhai Nagar, Vidyaranyanagar Colony, and Dyan Vatika) for a Period 24 Months.	Rs. 99,02,853/-
3	**Hubballi Division :** Repairs to Roof, Flooring Doors and windows in Quarters at Dharwad and Repairs to Compound wall to Type-III Quarters at Alnawar.	Rs. 41,63,105/-
4	**Hubballi Division :** TFTR on Br No. 91 approaches for a length of 0.9 Km. in Gadag - Hotgi (GDG-HG) Section.	Rs. 1,48,13,218/-

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 21-05-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer /Co-Ordination
PUB/34/AAD/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Hubballi**
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

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10:00 am to 8:00 pm (SUNDAY OPEN)

To kill the demon Tripuna, Bhagwan Shiv meditated for 1000 years with open eyes to aquire the aghora astra.
As He closed his eyes, tear drops fell on earth and the Rudraksha tree was born bearing fruits to liberate mankind from sufferings....
Various mukhis from 1-21 are found in nature blessed by different Gods & Goddesses.

खादन्मांसं पिबन्मद्यं सङ्गच्छन्नन्त्यजानपि।
पातकेभ्यो विमुच्येत रुद्राक्षं शिरसि स्थिते॥ 8
Srimad Devi Bhagvatam, Book – 3, Chapter – 6
If the wearer of Rudraksha eats flesh, drinks alcohol, and visits those who one is forbidden to meet, even then, that person does not incur any sin.

सर्वाश्रमाणां वर्णानां स्त्रीशुद्राणां शिवाज्ञया।
धार्याः सदैव रुद्राक्षा यतीनां प्रणवेन हि।
Shiva Purana, Vidyesvara Saṁhita, Chapter - 25
People of all Ashrams and Varnas, all classes, castes, and gender can wear Rudraksha at the bidding of Lord Shiva. The Yogis and ascetics should wear Rudraksha accompanied by the Omkara (the sound of Om).

पंचदेवप्रियश्चैव सर्वदेवप्रियस्तथा।
सर्वमन्त्राञ्जपेद्भक्तो रुद्राक्षमालया प्रिये॥
Shiva Purana, Vidyesvara Saṁhita, Chapter - 25
Rudraksha is dear to the Panch Devatas (the five major Gods of Hinduism - Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Ganesh, and Surya) and all the other Gods too. It is hereby instructed to the devotees that Rudraksha mala can be used for Japa of all mantras.

यथा च दृश्यते लोकेरुद्राक्षफलदः शुभः।
न तथा दृश्यतेऽन्या च मालिका परमेश्वरि॥
Shiva Purana, Vidyeshvara Samhita, Chapter
O Parameshvari, no other necklace or rosary known in this world is as auspicious and fruitful as the Rudraksha mala.

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It is specially designed for students. It enhances memory, concentration, and focus. It can be worn as a pendant or as a bracelet.

SWASTHYA BANDH® For Good Health
It helps in proper blood circulation and gives relief from stress, anxiety and blood Pressure. This mala enhances energy level of the wearer.

AGYA CHAKRA® For Businessmen
This pendant in gold has a 14 mukhi Rudraksha which is considered a precious divine gem (Devmani). It strengthens the intuition. Ideal for businessmen and for those in speculative businesses, mining, metal & construction.

SURYA POWER® (For Name/ Fame/Success)
This pendant in gold has a 12 mukhi Rudraksha. It enhances wearer's leadership abilities, managerial skills and aids in growth and success. Good for heart and internal organs.

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UNITY POWER For Relationships
This combination is good for family peace & harmony and for finding a suitable soul- mate.

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DOSH NIVARAK® (For Protection & removing Negativity)
Dosh Nivarak, wards off negativity, evil spirits, and jealousy factor from our lives. This should be hung inside the entrance of the House / Office and is believed to ward off Vaastu Dosha and ushers in positive energy.

भक्तिश्रद्धा युतस्चैव सर्व कामार्थ सिद्धये।
रुद्रक्ष्न्धारयेन मन्त्रेर्देव्नालास्ये वर्जित:॥
As per scriptures, wearing all mukhi Rudraksha with devotion bestows the wearer with the ultimate virtues of Dharma, Artha, Kaama, and Moksha. Wearing all mukhi Rudraksha fulfils all desires and aspirations of the wearer. Scriptures mention about 1-14 Mukhi Rudraksha but Rudraksha till 21 mukhis are found in nature.
SIDDHA MALA®, a trademark registered product from Rudralife, comprising of 1-14 Mukhi Rudraksha is considered a very effective and powerful Mala. Positive testimonials from people who are wearing the Siddha Mala vouch for the effectiveness of this combination. With experience of over 20 years Rudralife has observed that the wearers of Siddha Mala, develop an inner desire to upgrade to an INDRA MALA®, which is the most powerful Mala in nature, comprising of Rudraksha from 1 to 21 Mukhi. The Indra Mala is considered a divine family heirloom helping to keep the wealth within the family from generation to generation.

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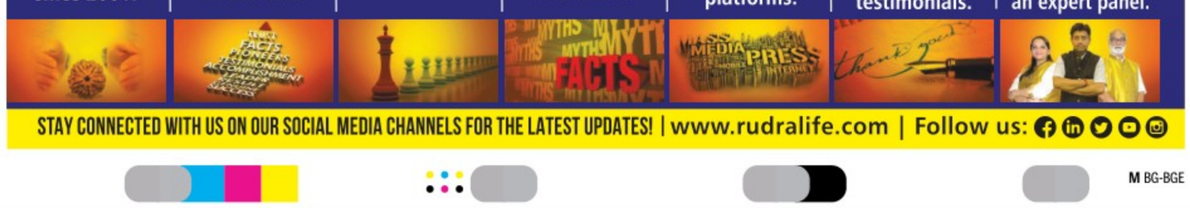

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Trust in machines

It is reassuring that the Supreme Court found nothing to impair faith in EVMs

The Supreme Court of India's rejection of the demand for 100% verification of the paper trail left by the votes cast through electronic voting machines comes as no surprise, as there is no hard evidence that the current verification system suffers from any irremediable lacuna. The two concurring judgments of the Bench reiterate the faith the judiciary has so far reposed in the integrity of the electoral process, especially after the introduction of the voter verifiable paper audit trail, or VVPAT. In the process, the Bench also rejected the idea of reverting to paper ballots, as such a measure would indeed be regressive and negate the gains from the elimination of vulnerabilities associated with paper ballots. This is not the first time that the Court has declined to interfere with the system in place; it had earlier refused to order 50% verification of the paper trail in one case and 100% verification in another. The Court has utilised this petition to review the administrative and technical safeguards in the system and found nothing to impair its faith in it. The two directions given by the Court address the other serious apprehensions: that the symbol loading units be secured and kept in safe custody for 45 days after declaration of results and that the top two losing candidates could seek a verification of the micro-controllers in 5% of the EVMs in specified polling booths so that tampering, if any, may be detected.

In a 2013 ruling, the Supreme Court held that "a paper trail is an indispensable requirement of free and fair elections". In another case, it favoured the increase in the number of polling stations in which VVPAT verification would be done from one per Assembly constituency or segment to five. The introduction of a paper audit trail itself was in response to apprehensions that voters had no way of ascertaining if their votes were recorded correctly. It is somewhat ironical that the verification system put in place to address such fears itself has become a bone of contention as to the extent to which the paper trail has to be verified. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, in his opinion, has recorded suggestions that VVPAT slips may be counted through machines, and that symbols loaded in the VVPAT units may be barcoded for easy counting in future. It ought to be clear that such technological advancement alone can make the process suspicion-proof. A larger point to be made is that the apprehensions and suspicions of possible manipulation indicate a level of mistrust in the Election Commission of India not seen in the past. Voter confidence in the system of voting and counting is one thing, but the need for the election watchdog to be seen as impartial is quite another.

Aid for war

Ukraine, Israel win as Biden gets bipartisan support for aid package

After lengthy negotiations, the United States Senate has passed with bipartisan support a $95 billion programme to send aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. The final vote tally was 79-18, with three Democrats voting alongside 15 Republicans against the bill. The aid package brings together four distinct bills that the House of Representatives passed separately last weekend, respectively supplying almost $61 billion in aid for Ukraine, above $26 billion for Israel, over $8 billion for the Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific region, and one bill relating to Tik Tok. In their current shape, the bills closely resemble an aid package that the Senate had passed earlier this year, an initiative that was ultimately shot down when House Speaker Mike Johnson refused to bring it to the floor of his chamber. Now that it has been passed in the Senate, the legislation will move forward to the desk of President Joe Biden to sign into law, as he has said he intends to do, thus opening the door to helping Ukraine to push back against Russian aggression, to providing wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian aid to Gaza, and to countering territorial threats in the Indo-Pacific that are linked to China. The fact that the omnibus aid bills package passed with such strength in the Upper Chamber of Congress constitutes a key win for Mr. Biden, Democratic lawmakers, and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has toiled for long months to send aid to Ukraine, in the face of opposition from the far-right wing of his own party.

That opposition, which threatens to spoil the plans of the Republican Party 'mainstream', includes the likes of the House Freedom Caucus, comprising ultra conservative members of Congress who broadly support the agenda of former President Donald Trump. They are especially opposed to aid packages, which they consider a threat to their isolationist vision for the U.S. – to the point where Mr. Johnson had to introduce a 'sweetener' into the bill to win their vote, a promise to ban Tik Tok if it did not divest itself of Chinese ownership within a year. That the far-right segment was able to exert its influence on the agenda of Congress to this extent is remarkable, given that it only has a slim majority in the House, and both the Senate and White House are in the hands of the Democrats. In any case, this sizeable aid package is likely to be the last one that is approved for Ukraine and other U.S. allies until after November, which will see the White House, the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate head to the polls. If Mr. Trump emerges victorious, the rightward slide of the Congress might gather considerable momentum, giving the MAGA movement the teeth that it needs to carry forward its agenda of institutional nihilism.

Sounding the gavel on curative jurisdiction

"The certainty and guidance which men seek in the law stems from their yearning for security and safety, which is the legacy of childhood." – Prof. H.L.A. Hart

The Supreme Court of India is a rather extraordinary court. In addition to its being the highest court of appeal, a federal court, as well as a court of advisory jurisdiction, it also possesses the power to appoint and transfer judges of the High Courts and the Court itself.

In 2002, the Court took on a new power called the "Curative Jurisdiction". It is a power to correct its judgments, after they have become final. This is distinct from the power of review under Indian law, which enables all courts to rectify errors which are apparent from their records.

The Court has a constitutional role to declare the law. The law must, and often does, progress with the growth in human knowledge and with societal change. The judgments of courts must reflect and sometimes trigger the changes in law. It is for this reason that courts modify their views. Examples of changes in the Court's views include the right of privacy, decriminalisation of homosexuality and so on. Curative Jurisdiction is different. This is not merely the Court changing its view on a position of law but is a reversal of the Court's own view in a specific case, above and beyond even the power of review.

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The Delhi Metro Rail judgment

In this article, we argue that the Supreme Court does more harm than good in the exercise of this jurisdiction, and we propose to demonstrate this through the analysis of a judgment rendered on April 10, 2024. This was a decision of a three-judge Bench of the Court in a curative petition in *Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd.* ("DMRC") *vs Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd* ("DAMEPL"), which rekindles this question.

DAMEPL succeeded before an Arbitral Tribunal in a high value claim. The award was predicated on a plea that the termination, by DAMEPL, of a long-term contract relating to a stretch of the Delhi metro rail, was valid. Such termination was based on a termination clause which permitted DAMEPL to terminate the contract based on issuance of a notice to cure defects in the event that DMRC "failed to cure such breach or take effective steps for curing such breach". The breach, according to DAMEPL (as upheld by the Arbitral Tribunal) was the existence of defects in the metro's construction. According to DAMEPL and the Arbitral Tribunal, the failure to cure such defects had triggered DAMEPL's right to terminate.

> A top court which swings back and forth based on changing trends lacks the constancy and gravitas that is fundamental to a court of last resort

Prior to the termination, DAMEPL had stopped rail operations on the basis that the line was unsafe to operate. Shortly after the termination, both parties had made a joint request to the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety to reopen operations. The CMRS sanctioned this subject to certain conditions including speed restrictions. While reliance had been placed on the CMRS sanction by DMRC, the AT, after examining the CMRS sanction, held that it would not be material in deciding the issues.

The challenge to the award moved to the Supreme Court which upheld the award after setting out the limited scope to challenge an award under Indian law. A review petition was also dismissed. However, for the first time ever, the Court, in a curative petition, set aside an arbitral award.

Exercise of curative jurisdiction

The interference by the Court was on two grounds. First, that interpretation of the termination clause was perverse since the Arbitral Tribunal had failed to recognise that it was sufficient for the DMRC to take effective steps to cure the breach – curing the breach in its entirety was not necessary. Second, that the CMRS sanction was vital evidence which had been ignored.

This is significant for two reasons. First, the Court had hitherto supported a position of minimal interference in arbitral awards. And second, that the Court held that its own verdict in 2019, which was in line with this pre-existing position, was wrong.

It settled law that a court, while setting aside an award does not sit as a court of appeal. The Court is bound to accept a potentially incorrect, though plausible, view on the interpretation of a contract and does not have the power to reappreciate evidence. While the Court no doubt has the power to interfere with a "perverse" interpretation, the subjective slope between a "perverse" interpretation and a "plausible but incorrect" interpretation is slippery.

Further, had the Arbitral Tribunal ignored vital evidence, a ground for interference would have been made out; but not when the Arbitral Tribunal, being the sole judge of weight of any evidence, had considered the evidence and held it to be of little significance.

Thus, the Court exercising its Curative Jurisdiction, reversed its own judgment which had upheld the arbitral award.

The problems

Imagine if you went to a dentist to have your wisdom tooth removed. The procedure is carried out. You then go to a board of senior dentists who tell you that the dentist did the right thing. Four years later, they call you back in for a review, and then tell you that they are doing a "curative procedure" and putting your wisdom tooth back in.

Curative Jurisdiction is effectively the Supreme Court seeking to correct its mistakes.

While there is merit in correcting one's mistakes, an institution which underpins the country's judiciary and which is the final interpreter of the Constitution must look beyond errors in individual cases. The Supreme Court declares the law for the nation and posterity, and not for one-off cases.

While it is no doubt true that the interpretation set out by the Supreme Court in *DMRC vs DAMEPL* is the correct interpretation and would have been justified had it been an exercise of appellate jurisdiction, the exercise itself could be said to be beyond the contours of permissible interference with an arbitral award. There are many such instances when awards based on incorrect interpretations are upheld owing to the principle of minimum judicial interference. Courts have, by and large, adopted a hands off approach, at least post 2015, to further the policy of lawmakers as reflected in the 2015 amendments to the arbitration legislation.

One looks to the Supreme Court for guidance and strength. It is the beacon of law. We expect it to be a pole star. The exercise of revisiting one's own decisions is good in an individual, but is not good for an institution that declares the law. Our perceptions of right and wrong are often influenced by the immediacy of the trend of current thought. A Supreme Court which swings back and forth based on changing trends lacks the constancy and gravitas which we believe to be fundamental to a court of last resort.

To borrow Justice Jackson's words, the Supreme Court is not final because it is infallible but infallible because it is final.

The right and the future of India's masjids

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's frequent attempts to allude to the Ram Mandir in the ongoing election campaign as his major achievement indicates the Bharatiya Janata Party's desire to seek electoral benefits from the subject. Seen in the wider context of the ongoing survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and claims over the Shahi Idgah Masjid in Mathura, it is apparent that the mandir-masjid conflict may enter a new era in the post-2024 election period.

In June 2022, in the wake of the Gyanvapi controversy, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat made an appeal in Nagpur – that the present generations of Muslims should not be held responsible for the wrongs committed in history by Muslim rulers. "Why look for Shiv linga in every Masjid?" Bhagwat asked. It was a sensible statement but nothing substantive has followed since then.

Instead, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, has remained most vocal with regard to Kashi and Mathura. In a speech in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in February 2024, while drawing parallel with the *Mahabharat*, he said, "Krishna asked for five villages, today's Hindu society asks for three centres: Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura." He appealed to Indian Muslims to give up claim in Kashi and Mathura. During the Ayodhya movement of the 1980s and 1990s, there was a slogan '*Ayodhya to Jhanki Hei, Kashi Mathura Baaki Hei*'. It is now certain that the "*Kashi Mathura Baaki Hei*" part of that slogan has been politically activated.

History and the Jama Masjid

Though the oldest Masjid in India is located in Kerala, no other Masjid has been connected with Muslim history as closely as Delhi's Jama Masjid. During the 1857 Rebellion, it was a site of enormous activities and was defiled and desecrated by the colonial army. We learn that on September 20, 1857, the British sepoys danced around a victory fire inside the Masjid. It was transformed into a military barrack.

Shaikh Mujibur Rehman

is the author of a forthcoming book, 'Shikwa-e- Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims' and teaches at the Jamia Millia Central University, New Delhi

> In the aggressive quest for electoral gains using the trump card of religion, there ought to be a quiet realisation that masjids are central to the religious lives of Muslims

Unspeakable forms of defilement took place inside the Masjid premises during its military occupation. In numerous ways Muslims paid a disproportionate price with their lives and property. They were humiliated for their participation in what many historians call India's First War of Independence. Sadly, the Hindutva right barely recognises Muslim sacrifice. Many months later, the Jama Masjid was returned to Muslims. Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst's book, *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion*, provides vivid details about various aspects of the uprising and how it has impacted Muslim identity.

Interestingly, there were discussions to demolish the Jama Masjid during the 1857 rebellion. It was revealed by William Howard Russell, who served as the Indian correspondent for *The Times* during 1857-59. In his diary titled *My Diary in India, in the Year 1858-9*, Russell wrote: "It has been warmly suggested that we should destroy the Jumma Masjid. The fact is that the Mohammedan element in India is that which causes us the most trouble...." Mr. Russell goes on to add, "if we could eradicate the traditions and destroy the temples of Mahomed by one vigorous effort, it would be well for the Christian faith and for the British rule."

The Jama Masjid still stands in Delhi and has been a witness to the challenges that Indian Muslims have faced ever since. On December 6, 1992 when the Babri Masjid was demolished, hundreds of Muslims gathered that evening at Delhi's Jama Masjid and were addressed by the Shahi Imam. Nothing much was reported on January 22, 2024, the inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Ever since the Supreme Court of India's verdict in November 2019 on the Ayodhya dispute, Muslims all over India have conducted themselves with great dignity in the hope that it would close the mandir-masjid conflict chapter forever. But that does not seem to be the case given the way the issue is still raised in the Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign by its tallest leaders.

For the Jama Masjid's renovation, a request was made to the United Progressive Alliance government to approve financial assistance from abroad, which was turned down on the ground that it could have security concerns. No security concerns are seen in the global mobilisation of resources by the Hindutva right for its activities. In 2021, in response to a question raised in Parliament on the state of the Jama Masjid and its need for renovation, the Modi government declined to do so.

The danger of further polarisation

The fact remains that masjids are central to the religious lives of Muslims. The first Masjid of Islam was built in Madina called Quba during the Prophet's time. At this point, the Hindutva right has a template based on politics, mobilisation and judicial intervention to grapple with future mandir-masjid disputes based on what took place between December 6, 1992 and January 22, 2024 or even prior to it.

Standing in its way is the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 that aims to maintain the religious character of places as they existed on August 15, 1947. Given that changing this Act of 1991 is far easier than the dilution of Article 370, it is not hard to imagine what its fate could be. Whatever it may be, the mandir-masjid controversy may take centre stage and go beyond Kashi and Mathura, deepening religious polarisation even further and undermining India's fledgling secularism.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Super cautious

In a 'show me the man and I will show you the law' mode, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has taken the circuitous route to serve notice for violation of the model code of conduct stated to have been committed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Page1, "EC sends notice to Nadda for plaint against Modi", April 26).

The spewing of malice and hate, utterly indefensible, has been handled with kid gloves by the ECI without even mentioning the name of the venom spewer. It would have been logical had the ECI taken the sensible stand that "he who asks questions cannot avoid the answers"

Ayyasseri Raveendranath,
Aranmula, Kerala

Think coalition

We have observed over the 10-year rule of the Narendra Modi government that, to its credit, there has been much good work done. Yet, a one-man show backed by single party majoritarian rule can be dangerous in the long run. By now we are familiar with Mr. Modi's style of functioning, which can be described as "my way or the highway". There is a need for a coalition government. Even though it would have quite a few limitations in terms of ensuring faster growth, such a government would have built-in checks and balances. One-man rule is neither good nor desirable in a nation as large, diverse, multi-religious and multi-ethnic as India. Let us hope that intelligent voters will ponder over the matter dispassionately and exercise their vote in the days ahead.

Satish Murdeshwar,
Pune

Bell poll expenses

India is now moving ahead in the next phases of voting and the onus is now on the Election Commission of India to ensure that it discharges its most important role with utmost diligence. Its initial hesitance in squaring up to tall, important leaders on hate speeches, and using religion to garner votes requires faster action. Huge money is being spent on canvassing, promotions, and other expenses. Why not have a robust body to check expenses?

The Union Finance Minister was candid in one of her interviews to say that she does not have that much money to contest elections. Does that not tell the real story?

Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

Jarring

It does not behove the stature of the Prime Minister of India to make a jarring statement that the INDIA bloc will scrutinise the safes of "mothers and sisters" allegedly with the intention of 'looting' their wealth and passing it on to others. It is unfortunate that the leader says that the election manifesto of the Congress is the replica of the policies of the Muslim League. Why is there an attempt to stoke the flames of communal hatred when he extols himself to be the champion of social justice?

Abdul Kader,
Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu

Extend voting time

The decision to hold the general election amid sweltering heat has led to a disappointingly low voter turnout. It is disheartening to witness a significant portion of eligible voters staying away from the electoral process due to the discomfort and health risks posed by the oppressive weather. This low voter turnout undermines the very foundation of democracy and raises questions about the fairness and inclusivity of the electoral process. The Election Commission of India should reconsider time restrictions. Voters should be allowed to exercise their franchise until 9 p.m. This would enhance voter turnout and, thereby, the overall integrity of the electoral process.

Lalgudi Muralidharan,
Lalgudi, Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Workers at the Nagaisuree Tea Garden in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. SHIV SAHAY SINGH

Death and distress in the Dooars

In the lower reaches of the Himalayas in West Bengal, workers struggle with hunger, poor pay, and the intermittent shutting down of large tea plantations. The poverty is sometimes killing, reports **Shiv Sahay Singh**, who met those involved in the production of tea

Almost two months after her husband Dhani Oraon died at 58, allegedly of starvation, Asharani Oraon weighs 29.9 kg. When she was rescued by the district administration after pressure from tea garden unions and brought to a hospital on February 6, 2024, four days after Dhani's death, Asharani weighed 26 kg. Dhani was a worker at Madhu Tea Garden in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, which had reopened in December 2021 after being closed for about seven years.

Even with a blanket wrapped around, Asharani, 53, whose body mass index (BMI) on April 7 stood at 13.8 kg/m2 (denoting severe thinness), is frail and can barely walk. She mumbles that the hospital is feeding her "eggs, banana, and rice". Still in shock, she cannot answer any questions about her husband's death.

At Madhu Tea Garden, the old ramshackle hut of the Oraons, barely held together by tarpaulin sheets, has been razed by Rajesh Lakra, a local tribal leader, who has built a new shed for Asharani. He has launched a campaign on social media in support of tea garden workers, weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Hibiscus flowers bloom in the deserted compound.

Based in the Dooars, the 'door' to Bhutan, ranging between 90 metres and 1,500 metres above sea level, is a blue-sky, green-hill, flowing-rivulet remote area that people from around flock to, for a break. The region is different from Darjeeling – the other tea-growing area of Bengal that is cooler, wetter, more misty – with the tea itself tasting different. The Dooar brew is bright, smooth, and full-bodied, lighter than Assam, unlike Darjeeling's GI-protected soft, smoky liquor.

"This year, 2024, marks 150 years of tea production in the Dooars area, as the first tea plantations in the region were set up in 1874, a few decades after Darjeeling," says Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, the president of the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations, a tea trader based in the Dooars.

The death of Dhani, a permanent worker, has raised questions about incomes lower than the minimum wage, food insecurity, and a sick sector's use by politicians as a poll plank.

As per the Paschim Banga Cha Majoor Samity (PBCMS), a trade union representing tea estate workers, of the 150 big tea gardens, 18 (12 in Alipurduar and six in Jalpaiguri) are closed. The Tea Board of India statistics say that the annual production of tea from West Bengal in 2023 was 422 million kg, 54.5% of which was produced from the Dooars.

For the 3.5 lakh to 4 lakh tea garden workers, minimum wages and land ownership are key issues in the Lok Sabha elections, as the industry holds the key to seats like Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri, where elections took place in the first phase on April 19.

The uncertainty of closure

Neighbours and relatives of the Oraons say the couple could not get the benefits of the public distribution system because Dhani's Aadhaar and ration cards were not linked, and the system could not recognise his fingerprints, common among people who do manual work.

Katya Kharia, one of the neighbours, says the family was receiving about ₹1,500 per month by way of FAWLOI (Financial Assistance to Workers of Locked Out Industries) when the garden was shut. When it reopened, the money stopped, but Dhani was weak and could not work. "We would help them with rice, but it was not sufficient," Kharia says. She also complains that the wages, usually paid every two weeks, are sometimes irregular at the tea garden.

> The workers in small tea gardens are treated as agricultural labourers and do not have rights of wages and provident fund like big tea garden workers
>
> **ANURADHA TALWAR**
> Trade union activist and convener of PBCMS

The starvation death allegation led to a fact-finding mission on February 4 and 5 by members of the PBCMS and the Right to Food and Work Campaign (RTFWC-West Bengal chapter), which is supported by organisations and individuals.

"The inaction by the government has made this entire population... already weak due to the long closure, vulnerable. Dhani Oraon, even though he was a permanent worker, was neglected by both the management and the government...," the fact-finding report noted.

Asharani is not the only one who has an alarmingly low BMI. After the alleged starvation death, the PBCMS and RTFWC conducted a survey across seven tea gardens in Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri districts. Out of the 122 tea garden workers surveyed, 64 were underweight, with a BMI less than 18.5 kg/m2.

Marayam and Swati Oraon, two tea garden workers, complained that with the daily wage being ₹250 (West Bengal's minimum wage is ₹376 per day even for unskilled labour), it is difficult to sustain families. "After opening the garden, the only advantage is that we do not have to go out to work in other places," says Marayam.

Temba Oroan, another tea garden worker, is reconstructing his hut after an elephant attacked it and trampled upon its remains a few months ago. "I was given a torchlight and a tarpaulin sheet from the forest department, but no compensation," says the feeble-looking Temba, busy on a Sunday afternoon at a betel nut plantation, to generate additional income.

Purbayan Chakraborty, a lawyer who was part of the fact-finding team, says as per the Plantations Labour Act, 1951, the tea garden management is mandated to provide for repair, which they never do, leaving workers to fend for themselves. He also adds that the Act mandates that the Assistant Labour Commissioner conduct an inspection and take necessary steps for rehabilitation, but such inspections are never done.

The closed Dekhlapara Tea Garden in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. SHIV SAHAY SINGH

Laws and livelihoods

Over the past 10 years, the Minimum Wages Advisory Committee on Tea for the State of West Bengal has held 20 meetings, but has not been able to reach an agreement on minimum wages. This month, the Calcutta High Court's Circuit Bench at Jalpaiguri directed the Labour Commissioner of the State to fix minimum wages within six weeks, to be implemented within two weeks. The last time the wages of tea garden workers were hiked was on April 27, 2023, when the State government raised the daily wage rate from ₹232 to ₹250. This was challenged by various tea garden managements before the High Court.

With more and more big gardens either turning sick or shuttering, small growers are contributing to the bulk of the production in the tea sector. The Tea Board of India data indicate that in 2023, small tea growers (about 34,000 in the State, with less than 25 acres per firm) contributed to 118 million kg (54.5%) of the tea production in the Dooars, whereas big tea gardens produced 112 million kg. In fact, across the State, small tea growers contribute 63.7% (269 million kg of 422 million kg) of all tea production in the State.

"This is because the governments, both at the State and Centre, are encouraging small tea growers. The big gardens, which employ a large number of workers, are not getting any incentives. The workers in small tea gardens are treated as agricultural labourers and do not have rights of wages and provident fund like big tea garden workers," says Anuradha Talwar, a trade union activist and convener of PBCMS.

> The entire exercise by the government is aimed at usurping our land
>
> **KIRSEN KHARIA**
> Uttar Bangal Cha Shramik Sangathan

Unlike Darjeeling tea, which is struggling with low production, tea growers in the Dooars face price stagnation. "The tea from the Dooars has not made a brand for itself like Darjeeling tea or Assam tea has," says Chakraborty, who approaches the subject from a trader's perspective rather than a worker's.

He adds that low rainfall in the Dooars is forcing planters to use pesticides. Last month, bought leaf tea factories (BLFs) wrote to the Tea Board of India saying that they would procure only green leaves that meet the compliance standards of the Indian food safety regulator, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. The tea growers raised the issue with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when she was campaigning for the Lok Sabha poll in north Bengal. She assured them that she would look into it.

Poll stops

In the last Lok Sabha poll, the region had overwhelmingly voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In the 2021 Assembly election, too, the BJP continued with its electoral dominance. The Trinamool Congress leadership accuses the BJP of doing nothing for the tea gardens. "The BJP's guarantee is a zero guarantee," the Chief Minister had said while addressing a rally at Alipurduar on April 6, adding that her party had done more.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who in 2019 had derived a 'personal' connect with the people of the Dooars, harnessing his chaiwala (tea seller) past, had during this election campaign blamed the West Bengal government for the plight of tea garden workers. Addressing a rally in Jalpaiguri district on April 7, he had said, "The tea gardens of Bengal are in the worst condition compared to anywhere in the country...The workers of the tea garden are being denied even basic facilities."

The issue of land rights and dwelling too turned out to be crucial this election season. "Tea garden workers live on land leased by the company owner from the State government. So, they have no land rights and are subject to being harassed and evicted," says Talwar.

She says in 2020, the West Bengal government formulated a Cha Sundari Scheme to provide free housing units to tea garden workers. Now, instead of houses, the government is issuing pattas for 5 decimals of land (a little over 2,000 square feet) under the Cha Sundari Extension Scheme, along with a ₹1.2-lakh bank transfer, to build houses. People fear eviction, whether they accept the scheme or not, as there is no clarity.

A Cha Sundari dwelling unit at Dekhlapara tea garden in Alipurduar district is testament to why the scheme does not have many takers. Dekhlapara is a tea garden that has been closed since 2000. Houses and general infrastructure are crumbling. Yet, out of the 327 dwelling units, only 70 have been occupied.

Bishal Malpaharia, who has shifted into the Cha Sundari dwelling unit, says other members of his family live in the tea garden quarters. "This is for a small family," he says of their home measuring 394 square feet.

Bishnu Tanti, a worker at Dekhlepara, says the garden was operational for eight months during 2023, giving people hope. He has not moved to the Cha Sundari dwelling unit, but Tanti has accepted the ₹1.2 lakh and is building a kitchen in his tea garden quarters.

Hundreds of workers have agreed to join the scheme and issued no-objection certificates for the land they currently occupy. They have received an initial cash transfer of ₹60,000. A few are still resisting.

Bandhu Oroan says he is a fifth-generation tea garden worker. "My dwelling unit is spread over 10 decimals of land; why should I agree to a patta of five decimals?" he says.

Over the past few months, Kirsen Kharia of Nagaisuree Tea Garden of Jalpaiguri district has been trying to unite workers against accepting homestead pattas. Kharia says weeks ago a large contingent of police along with local authorities tried to survey the garden and threatened him.

"We do not want five decimals of land. We have been living in these houses for generations and want land rights for our dwellings. The entire exercise by the government is aimed at usurping our land," says Kharia, who is associated with the Uttar Bangal Cha Shramik Sangathan.

Kharia says the government wants to sell tea garden land to corporates and shift the workers into an invisible remote corner. The activist refers to the 2019 Tea Tourism and Allied Business Policy of the State government, by which a maximum of 150 acres or 15% of tea plantation land could be used for tourism and other businesses.

Collapse and uncertainty

Several local associations and unions under the banner of the Joint Action Committee fielded an Independent candidate, Arjun Indevar, 62, for the Alipurduar Lok Sabha seat. His campaign was built on the demand of land rights for tea workers. Indevar is from the Madhu Tea Garden and says tribals, Gorkhas, and other locals have been working in the area since 1874. "The land of our forefathers was taken away under Section 6 (3) of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953. We are being made slaves and cannot even repair our houses," he says.

Meanwhile, Kismat Mahali's house has bricks falling apart; there is no electricity. "I have not received money under the Cha Sundari Extension Scheme. I need to build the house as soon as possible," Mahali, a worker at the tea garden, says. Kharia, who was campaigning for Indevar, remains quiet as Mahali narrates how difficult it is to stay in the dwelling with her grandchild. "How can I persuade her not to accept the government scheme?" Kharia says.

April is tea plucking season and the slow process leaves room for chatter. At Nagaisuree, spread over hundreds of acres, women talk about leopard attacks in the garden and that adjoining gardens pay a higher incentive for those who pluck over 25 kg a day, the mandate.

A few hundred metres away from the tea bushes, there is a mobile crèche, where children play, unaware of the tea garden tensions.

From Page One

SC backs EVMs, rules out revival of paper ballots

The court refused to strike down Rule 49 MA of the Conduct of Election Rules, which exposes a voter to penal proceedings under Section 177 of the Indian Penal Code for submission of false information if his complaint of mismatch between the votes cast and votes counted is not proved.

The court suggested that the Election Commission (EC) explore the possibility of devising an "electronic machine" to count the VVPAT paper slips. This direction may have been prompted by an affidavit submitted by the EC during the hearing of the case.

"Manual counting of VVPAT slips is cumbersome at every step. The process cannot be expedited or hurried," the EC had said in its affidavit.

The court also suggested that political parties could be identified with unique bar codes, along with their symbols.

In a separate direction to the EC, the top court ordered that, from May 1, 2024, Symbol Loading Units should be sealed and secured after the process of loading symbols into VVPATs is over.

The court directed that the 'burnt' or uploaded memory of the microcontrollers of 5% of EVMs can be checked and verified by a team of engineers from the EVM manufacturers in case of any suspicion of tampering.

Such an exercise would be initiated on the basis of a written request from candidates who have come second or third in the vote tally. The application for verification should be sent within seven days of the declaration of the election results. The District Election Officer concerned, in consultation with the team of engineers, should verify the authenticity or intactness of the burnt memory of the microcontrollers of the EVMs. The expenses of the verification will be undertaken by the applicant candidates or their representatives. They will be refunded in case it is found that the EVMs have been tampered with, the court directed.

Phase II of LS polls records 61% voter turnout

In Rajasthan, a turnout of 64.07% was recorded. Some of the candidates in the fray included Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Kailash Choudhary, BJP State president C.P. Joshi and former Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi.

The second phase of polling in eight constituencies of Maharashtra concluded peacefully. The turnout averaged 59.63%. In Nanded's Ramtirth village, a youth vandalised both EVM and VVPAT with an axe at the local booth.

Around 73.78% polling took place in the second phase of election in West Bengal.Among the candidates in the fray are State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar, State Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Biplab Mitra, BJP's Raju Bista from Darjeeling and Trinamool's Krishna Kalyani from Raigan.

There were no reports of violence but there was some scuffle, including at Balurghat, where BJP candidate Sukanta Majumdar got embroiled in a brawl with Trinamool supporters. A BJP supporter was slapped by a Trinamool cadre in Balurghat.

In Kerala, where all seats went to polls, instances of bogus voting and breakdown of electronic voting machines were reported in some booths of the State.

CBI seizes cache of arms in Sandeshkhali

The agency also seized many "incriminating" documents related to Mr. Shahjahan.

Mr. Shahjahan was arrested by the West Bengal police on February 29. The CBI later took him into its custody in March, pursuant to the directions of a Division Bench of the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. He and his associates have been accused of grabbing land and sexually assaulting women in Sandeshkhali.

Loco pilots did not watch cricket during train crash

"Now we are installing systems which can detect any such distraction and make sure that the pilots and the assistant pilots are fully focussed on running the train," he had said. However, the sources said that there is no evidence to confirm Mr. Vaishnaw's charge.

A senior official in Waltair Division said that it was a "grave" mistake to have gone on record accusing the loco pilot and his assistant, who had both died on the spot, of watching cricket while on duty.

After Mr. Vaishnaw made his statement, the Railways issued an order banning the use of Bluetooth headphones among crew members during duty hours.

"Shockingly, it came to light that the crew members were engrossed in watching a cricket match on their mobile phones, facilitated by the use of Bluetooth devices or headphones. This blatant disregard for safety protocols is utterly unacceptable and places countless lives at grave risk," Akhil S. Anand, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Chennai Division, had said in the order.

Judge sees bid to undermine achievements of the nation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court judge, Justice Dipankar Datta, in his separate opinion upholding the electronic voting machine (EVM) system, said constitutional courts should "nip in the bud" a "fast-developing" trend among "certain vested groups" to undermine the achievements of the nation earned through the hard work and dedication of its sincere workforce.

"There seems to be a concerted effort to discredit, diminish, and weaken the progress of this great nation on every possible frontier. Any such effort, or rather attempt, has to be nipped in the bud," Justice Datta observed on Friday.

The judge's comments were triggered by submissions made in court by a petitioner, Association for Democratic Reforms, to revert to the paper ballot system of polling. He found the suggestion "inexplicable". "It is only improvements in the EVMs or even a better system that people would look forward to in the ensuing years," Justice Datta said.

SC judgment in EVM case a tight slap to Opposition, says Modi

He says that poor, backward classes, Dalits used to be deprived of their votes when Congress, RJD, and other INDIA bloc parties were in power

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday termed the Supreme Court judgment on electronic voting machines (EVMs) a "tight slap" to Opposition parties, including the Congress. He demanded an apology from them for "committing the sin of creating distrust" over EVMs.

He was speaking at public rallies in Araria and Munger in Bihar on Friday when the Supreme Court's order dismissing petitions asking that EVMs be discontinued in favour of paper ballots, and several other related matters, came through.

Verdict victory: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during a public meeting, in Munger, Friday. PTI

'No more old games'

"When the Congress, the RJD and other INDIA alliance parties were in power, the poor, backward and Dalits used to be deprived of their votes through booth capture. With the introduction of EVMs, they are no longer able to play their old game," Mr. Modi alleged.

"But today, the highest court of the land has delivered a verdict which comes as a tight slap to these parties," he said.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal welcomed the judgment, saying that the top court's orders had "exposed" the desire of Opposition parties including the Congress, to "defame" the Election Commission (EC).

"The Supreme Court in its decision said that the EVM system is all right, it's credible and there cannot be any tampering with it. We welcome this decision on behalf of the BJP," Mr. Meghwal said.

"The decision has exposed the Congress and other constituents of the Opposition INDIA bloc," he added.

Campaign for more use of VVPATs to continue, says Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The court has rejected petitions that sought cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs.

The Opposition parties, including the Congress, on Friday, said that they will continue with their political campaign on greater use of voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) to increase public trust in the electoral process.

The Supreme Court has rejected petitions that sought complete cross-verification of votes cast using electronic voting machines (EVMs) with VVPAT, saying "blindly distrusting" any aspect of the system can breed unwarranted scepticism.

Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X, said the Congress was not a party, directly or indirectly, to the petition on VVPATs that were rejected by the Supreme Court.

"We have taken note of the verdict of the two-judge Bench and our political campaign on the greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process will continue," he said.

Samajwadi Party chief and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said the fight against EVMs would continue.

The Supreme Court's order, CPI general secretary D. Raja said, raised further apprehensions on the credibility of EVMs. By suggesting that a bar code be printed on VVPAT slips for mechanical counting, the SC has implicitly accepted that there can be discrepancies between votes registered in EVMs and paper slips, he remarked.

"To reinstate trust in the voting process and to make the polling exercise foolproof, we will continue to demand greater transparency and 100% verification of VVPATs," Mr. Raja said.

Entering symbols in VVPAT units cannot be equated with uploading software, says court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said feeding serial numbers and names of candidates and their party symbols in bitmap files (images) in the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) units cannot be equated with uploading software.

The court was putting to rest apprehensions raised by petitioners that malicious software could be entered into the VVPAT along with symbols.

Appearing for the petitioner, Association for Democratic Reforms, advocate Prashant Bhushan had argued in court that when a vote was cast, the signal would travel from the ballot unit to the VVPAT to the control unit. He said malicious software hidden in the VVPAT would prove disastrous for free and fair elections.

The particulars of the candidates or the political parties are not loaded or stored in the VVPAT. K. MURALI KUMAR

"The symbol loading process undertaken by using the symbol loading unit cannot alter or modify the programme/firmware in the VVPAT which has been burnt/loaded in the memory. The burnt/loaded firmware in the control unit and the ballot unit is and remains candidate and political party agnostic," Justice Sanjiv Khanna observed.

The court explained that a laptop/PC with the symbol loading application is used to create a bitmap file comprising the serial number, the candidate name and the symbol.

This file is loaded on VVPAT units by using the symbol loading units about 10 to 15 days prior to the date of polling. The particulars of the candidates or the political parties are not loaded or stored in the VVPAT.

Authorised engineers of the manufacturers and the District Election Officer are involved in the symbol loading process. The whole process takes place in the presence of the candidates or their representatives and a monitor/TV screen displays the symbol loading process.

The control unit computes the total votes cast based on the number of times a button or all are pressed on the ballot unit. The control unit is agnostic to any political party or candidate, and only recognises the push button on the ballot unit.

Human error can occur in EVM-VVPAT system: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Human errors are possible in the electronic voting machine-voter verifiable paper audit trail (EVM-VVPAT) system of polling, the Supreme Court acknowledged in a judgment on Friday.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said the sole instance of discrepancy it could find in the EVM-VVPAT system occurred as recent as in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

A mismatch was found in a constituency in Andhra Pradesh. "On verification, it was found that the discrepancy had arisen on account of the failure of the presiding officer to delete the mock poll data," Justice Khanna said.

Though the court said it was "not possible to rule out human errors", it was consoled by the fact that "the manual on EVM and VVPATs deals with such situations and lays down the protocol which is to be followed".

The judgment reeled out statistics provided by the Election Commission on the efficacy of the EVM-VVPAT system.

"... Not even a single case of mismatch [except the one in Mydukur Assembly constituency] or wrong recording of votes were detected," Justice Khanna noted.

Not possible to pre-programme EVMs: court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said a return to paper ballots will bring back the evils of yesteryear, mainly booth-capturing, and it was anyway "impossible to pre-programme electronic voting machines (EVMs) in a spurious manner".

In their judgment, a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta explained how EVMs strike a deadly blow to booth-capturing, which is a criminal offence under Section 135A of the Representation of the People Act of 1951, by not permitting more than four votes a minute.

Major benefits

Unlike paper ballots, voting through EVMs is done by pressing a button, negating the major problem of invalid votes.

"The EVMs have effectively eliminated booth capturing by restricting the rate of vote casting to four votes per minute, thereby prolonging the time needed and thus checking insertion of bogus votes," the court explained.

The court noted that the EVMs reduce paper usage.

Further, it noted that EVMs reduce paper usage and alleviate logistical challenges. Finally, they provide administrative convenience by expediting the counting process and minimising errors.

The court explained how election officials have complete control of the polling process.

"After the pressing of the 'CLOSE' button on the control unit [of the EVM], there is no possibility of voting. By pressing the 'TOTAL' button on the control unit at any time, the total number of votes polled up to the time of pressing the button is displayed, without indicating the candidate-wise result of votes," the judgment noted.

The court highlighted that the micro-controllers of the EVMs are programmed at the manufacturing stage. Their original programme is agnostic both political party and candidate-wise.

"This process is done way before the elections and it is impossible to know the serial number of any candidate in advance. Thus, it is not possible to pre-programme the EVM in a spurious manner," the court concluded.

Two militants killed in Sopore; civilian, two soldiers injured

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Two militants were killed on Friday during a two-day-long anti-militancy operation in Sopore in north Kashmir.

One civilian and two soldiers were also injured in the exchange of fire.

"The encounter in Sopore's Nowpora started on Thursday night. This morning, two terrorists were killed. Incriminating material, arms and ammunition have been recovered. One of them has been identified as Saifullah. We are ascertaining their affiliations," Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Vidhi Kumar Birdi said.

Mr. Birdi said, "The Sopore operation showed how alert security forces are to deal with the situation."

"The condition of the injured is stable," an official said.

Earlier in the day, classwork was suspended in all educational institutes in Sopore.

"I advise all to stay away from the encounter site," Shabir Ahmad Raina, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sopore, said.

The encounter started during a joint search operation of the Army and the J&K Police in Sopore.

SC seeks EC reply on petition for fresh poll if NOTA gets most votes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Election Commission (EC) to respond to a plea seeking fresh election in constituencies where NOTA (none of the above) wins majority votes.

The petition urged the court to direct the EC to frame rules stating that candidates who poll fewer votes than NOTA should stand debarred from contesting elections for five years.

The EC and various State Election Commissions introduced NOTA in November 2013.

From 2018 onwards, several States like Maharashtra, Haryana, Delhi and Puducherry began to treat NOTA as a "fictional electoral candidate".

"These State Election Commissions declared that if NOTA emerged as the winner in any election, there would be a mandatory re-poll. They categorically held that declaring the second highest candidate as winner (in case NOTA gets the highest votes), violates the underlying principle and object of NOTA," the petition said.

It said the rules of these States should be uniformly applied across the country.

ELECTIONS 2024

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Pink poll: People queue up to vote at a polling booth managed only by women officials in Jammu on Friday. AP

UTTAR PRADESH

Frame of fulfilment: A voter poses for a picture after casting her vote at Sector 78 in Noida. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ASSAM

Suffrage walk: Tiwa tribal women on their way to a polling station in Karbi Anglong district. RITU RAJ KONWAR

TRIPURA

Steadfast in duty: Members of the Bru community at a special polling centre set up about 170 km away from Agartala. PTI

Of service: Security personnel assist an elderly voter at a polling station in Balurghat in Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal on Friday. PTI

Three Bengal seats record 74% turnout in peaceful polling

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Voting for three Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal in the second phase of the Lok Sabha election was peaceful with a voter turnout of 73.78% as per provisional figures at 11.30 p.m. on Friday.

Of the three constituencies that went to the polls, Balurghat recorded the highest turnout at 74.65%, followed by Raiganj at 74.88% and Darjeeling at 71.89%.

Though there were no reports of violence, in Balurghat, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate and State party president Sukanta Majumdar got involved in a scuffle with Trinamool Congress supporters. A BJP supporter was slapped by a Trinamool worker in the constituency.

In Raiganj, Congress candidate Ali Imran Ramz said Trinamool workers shouted 'Joy Bangla' slogans on seeing him.

With the second phase of polling, the fate of 47 candidates have been sealed. Among the candidates in the fray were State Minister and Trinamool leader Biplab Mitra from Balurghat, the BJP's Raju Bista from Darjeeling and the Trinamool's Krishna Kalyani from Raiganj.

A total of 272 companies, comprising 27,200 personnel of Central Armed Police Forces, along with 12,983 State policemen were deployed for the election.

BJP supporter found dead

BJP supporter Dinobondhu Midya, a resident of Goramohol village at Moyna in Purba Medinipur district, was found dead. The body was recovered on Friday morning from a betel leaf factory. Midya's family members alleged that the youth was killed by Trinamool supporters.

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the death.

He said the postmortem should be conducted at a hospital run by the Union government and the whole process videographed.

The Calcutta High Court refused to accept the plea for a postmortem at a Centre-run facility saying it would indicate a complete breakdown of State-run institutions.

Barmer, Banswara see high polling in Rajasthan

Election ends in the desert State with second and final phase, which recorded an average turnout of 64.07%; supporters of rival candidates clash in Barmer, villagers boycott polls in three districts

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Over 64% of voters cast their ballot in the second and final phase of the Lok Sabha election in 13 of the 25 constituencies in Rajasthan on Friday. As many as 152 candidates are in the fray in the second phase in the State. The highest voter turnout of 73.68% was recorded in Barmer, followed by 72.24% in Banswara, while the average turnout in the State was 64.07%.

The desert State polled 58.28% votes in the first phase of election on April 19, while the overall turnout was 63.71% in 2019. The polling on Friday was brisk in most of the constituencies, where long queues of voters were seen outside the booths since early morning. The seats which went to the polls were situated in the western, south-eastern and southern parts of the State.

The candidates in the second phase polling included Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Kailash Choudhary, BJP State president C.P. Joshi and former Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi. Former Chief Ministers Ashok Gehlot and Vasundhara Raje campaigned for their sons in Jalore and Jhalawar-Baran, respectively.

Worth the wait: Women stand in a queue at a polling station in Barmer on Friday. REUTERS

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said the high polling percentage recorded in the second phase in the State would go in favour of the BJP. "The people in Rajasthan have cast their ballot to express their disapproval of appeasement and corruption," Mr. Sharma told presspersons here.

Booth capturing charge

The supporters of Independent candidate Ravindra Singh Bhati and Congress candidate Ummeda Ram Beniwal clashed at Sheo in Barmer district over allegations of booth capturing. Mr. Bhati, who represents Sheo in the Assembly, alleged that tapes had been pasted to hide his name printed on electronic voting machines. The polling was halted for half-an-hour after the clash.

Voters did not turn up to exercise their franchise at Aadibhit village in Banswara because of a dispute over the plans to establish a nuclear power plant. Villagers at Dhurasani in Pali district and Balwanta in Ajmer boycotted the polling citing water crisis and poor condition of roads.

An 80-year-old man, identified as Chhagan Lal, who was standing in the queue of voters in Pur town of Bhilwara district, collapsed after feeling dizzy and died before he could cast his ballot. A 108-year-old woman, Bhuri Bai, came on a wheelchair to the polling station in Loda Hera of Kota district.

Voting was held in Ajmer, Banswara, Bhilwara, Barmer, Chittorgarh, Jalore, Jodhpur, Jhalawar-Baran, Kota, Pali, Rajsamand, Tonk-Sawai Madhopur and Udaipur Lok Sabha constituencies. Chief Electoral Officer Praveen Gupta said about 2.8 crore people were eligible to vote in the second phase, for which a total of 28,758 polling booths were set up.

Peaceful borders spur brisk voting near LoC in Jammu

Peerzada Ashiq
JAMMU

Peaceful and brisk polling was recorded in the Jammu-Reasi Lok Sabha constituency in Jammu and Kashmir which has nine Assembly segments adjacent to the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LoC) on Friday. The turnout was 72.32%.

The Jammu-Reasi seat has 18 Assembly segments, and nine of them crossed 70% polling, with Akhnoor recording 78.27%, Bishnah 76.54%, Chhamb 75.76%, Gulabgarh 73.93%, Marh 79.31%, Nagrota 75.63%, Reasi 74.19%, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi 79.43%, and Vijaypur 75.67%.

In the past, Akhnoor and Vijaypur were badly hit by cross-border shelling in Jammu.

"Akhnoor has witnessed peace in the past five years. I voted for those who would ensure our safety and security along the IB," Rajni Khemu, a voter from Akhnoor, said.

Citizenship rights

Hundreds of West Pakistan refugees, who were granted citizenship rights by the Centre after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, also came out to vote in the Jammu-Samba belt.

"Finally, justice was meted out to our community. We were allowed to vote in the Lok Sabha polls and not the Assembly polls. Now, we can choose representatives at the national and local level too," Krishna Singh, a voter, said.

A woman shows the indelible ink mark after casting her vote in Jammu on Friday. AP

The Schedule Caste-reserved segments of Akhnoor, Bishnah, Ramgarh, Marh and Suchetgarh witnessed brisk polling throughout the day, officials said.

The impressive polling figures come despite threat to security after recent incidents of militant violence in the Union Territory.

As many as 22 candidates were in the fray in the constituency, which has over 17.8 lakh voters.

A total of 2,416 polling stations have been set up across the constituency.

The seat is witnessing a direct contest between the BJP's Jugal Kishore and the INDIA bloc's Raman Bhalla.

Voting ends in Manipur amid reports of disturbances

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Voting for the Lok Sabha election concluded in Manipur as 13 of the Assembly segments in the State's Outer Manipur constituency went to the polls in the second phase of polling on Friday, amid sporadic complaints of disturbances reported at polling stations in Ukhrul and Senapati districts.

The Assembly segments that voted on Friday recorded a turnout of around 78.78% as of 11.30 p.m.

"These areas have polling stations in very remote areas so the polling parties' return will take time. Once all of them return, we can have final turnout numbers," the Chief Electoral Officer of Manipur, Pradeep Kumar Jha, said.

Mr. Jha said that an electronic voting machine was damaged in at least one polling station of the Ukhrul district, where a prescribed examination process by the officials will determine the need for a re-poll.

Sources, however, added that four more polling stations in Ukhrul saw "disturbances" that might have vitiated the polling process there.

They also reported complaints of some people entering the Oinam Hill polling stations in Senapati district, where attempts were made to damage EVMs.

Voters waiting in a queue in Ukhrul of Manipur on Friday. ANI

"Three of the four polling stations in Oinam Hill were examined and it was found that results were retrievable. The fourth polling station of that location is being examined," one source said.

Poll officials, however, added that voting in the Outer Manipur constituency had been relatively more peaceful than in the 2019 election, when repolling had to be ordered for 19 polling stations.

Vandalism incidents

On Friday, several videos and photos emerged on social media, showing polling stations in Ukhrul vandalised.

Some of the pictures showed what appeared to be VVPAT slips strewn across the floor of a polling station with the EVM enclosure of the Election Commission lying on the ground.

In a video that was also posted on X (formerly Twitter) by Congress general secretary in-charge, communications, Jairam Ramesh, it could be seen that some people were appearing to intimidate voters at an Ukhrul polling station to vote for a particular party in the presence of security personnel.

In the accompanying post, Mr. Ramesh alleged that the voters were being pressured to vote for the Naga People's Front (NPF) candidate Kachui Timothy Zimik, with whom the Bharatiya Janata Party in Manipur has allied for this Lok Sabha election, choosing not to field its own candidate on Outer Manipur.

"The security forces are standing there mutely as our democracy is hijacked. These are the most important elections of our lifetime," Mr. Ramesh said in his post.

Nomination of BJP candidate cancelled

The nomination of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate for Birbhum in West Bengal, Debasish Dhar, was cancelled during the scrutiny of nomination papers citing technical grounds. Mr. Dhar, a former IPS officer, could not furnish a 'no dues' certificate from the State government.

Senior party leader Debtanu Bhattacharya, who filed his nomination papers for the seat on Thursday, is likely to be the BJP nominee in place of Mr. Dhar. The constituency, located in south Bengal, is going to the polls on May 13.

"Due to some technical reasons, my candidature has been cancelled. I will approach the Calcutta High Court after consulting my party leaders. I think the reasons cited are baseless," Mr. Dhar said.

Debasish Dhar was the Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar, during the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls. PTI

Mufti and Omar oppose 'move' to postpone poll

Two former J&K Chief Ministers, Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, on Friday opposed any move to defer polls for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat, a day after the Election Commission considered the representations made by a group of parties, including the BJP, for postponement.

"The ECI order to the J&K administration [to assess accessibility in Anantnag-Rajouri] has shocked me. It's after a long-time people of J&K have reposed faith in democracy. This government has snatched everything. Don't snatch the ballots too," Ms. Mufti said.

"The BJP and its subsidiary parties along with administration and the ECI are hatching conspiracy to reschedule polls," Mr. Abdullah said.

> I don't want to get into what he [Prime Minister] said about *mangalsutra*; election has to be fought on the basis of development
>
> **ASHOK GEHLOT**
> Former Rajasthan Chief Minister

Cong. suspends Kumbhani after Surat fiasco

The Gujarat Congress on Friday suspended its Surat candidate Nilesh Kumbhani, whose nomination form was rejected over discrepancies regarding signatures of the proposers leading to the BJP's Mukesh Dalal getting elected unopposed, from the party for six years.

> Why do you think Purnea is a hot seat today? No Narendra Modi, no Nitish Kumar, no Lalu Yadav from here, just Pappu
>
> **PAPPU YADAV**
> Independent candidate, Purnea

INBRIEF

AAP has put political interest over national interest: HC

The Delhi High Court on Friday admonished the Delhi government, and said that Arvind Kejriwal's continuation in the post of Chief Minister after his arrest has put the party's political interest above the national interest. The court was dealing with a plea by NGO Social Jurist highlighting the non-supply of books to students in Municipal Corporation of Delhi schools even after the commencement of the new academic session. The court's observation came after the Delhi government counsel said that the supply of textbooks requires approvals from Mr. Kejriwal, who is in judicial custody.

Court rejects Brij Bhushan's plea seeking further probe

A Delhi court on Friday rejected the application filed by BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Singh seeking further probe into the sexual harassment case filed against him by women wrestlers. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot of the Rouse Avenue Court also fixed May 7 as the date to pronounce the order on framing of charges against Mr. Singh and co-accused Virendra Tomar who were booked by the police for offences such as outraging modesty, making sexually coloured remarks, stalking and criminal intimidation. The counsel appearing for the women wrestlers termed the plea filed by Mr. Singh as "tactics to delay the trial".

CRPF DIG faces dismissal on charges of sexual harassment

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has issued notice to dismiss an officer in the rank of Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) amid allegations of sexual harassment, a CRPF official said on Friday. The officer, Khajan Singh, was posted as the chief sports officer of the CRPF when the allegations emerged, following which he was suspended in 2021. He is currently posted in Mumbai. After he won five gold medals at the national swimming championship in 1982, he received the Arjuna Award in 1984. He also won a silver in the 200m butterfly event at the 1986 Seoul Asian Games.

Adopt zero-tolerance towards terrorism: India at SCO meet

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane led the Indian delegation at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Asthana, Kazakhstan, on Friday where he emphasised the need to adopt a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism in all its forms for prosperity and development of the SCO member states. "A Joint Communique was issued after the meeting, in which the SCO Defence Ministers agreed, amongst other initiatives, to developing the idea of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', which is rooted in the ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'," said a statement from the Ministry of Defence.

On 'popular demand', *Bhaiyyaji* back in SP's pocket borough of Kannauj

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's last-minute return to the party's bastion has lit up the Lok Sabha electoral contest in eastern Uttar Pradesh; the seat has become a prestige issue for the party as in 2019, sitting BJP MP Subrata Pathak, in his third attempt at the hustings, wrested it from SP

Anuj Kumar
GHAZIABAD

In the ongoing Lok Sabha election, the Samajwadi Party has done many flip-flops in ticket distribution, but not many thought that the decision of party president Akhilesh Yadav contesting from Kannauj will also come as a second thought.

After declaring his nephew Tej Pratap Yadav as the candidate, Mr. Akhilesh decided to take on the BJP's Subrata Pathak, who inflicted a surprise defeat on the SP chief's wife, Dimple Yadav, in 2019, on the last day of nomination for the fourth round.

Taking the gauntlet: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav greets his supporters in Kannauj on April 25. He filed his papers for the Lok Sabha seat on the last day of nomination in the high-profile seat. ANI

Well-planned move

Party sources, though, are describing it as a well-thought-out strategy. Party spokesperson Abdul Hafiz Gandhi said: "Akhilesh*ji* has entered the fray on popular demand."

A party leader, requesting anonymity, said *Bhaiyyaji*, as Mr. Yadav is called in the region, wanted to check how much the grassroots worker wanted him to contest. "After seeing the electorate's response in the first round and the desperation of the leaders of the ruling party in their language, it was felt it will be prudent if Akhilesh*ji* himself enters the ring from the traditional seat of the party," he said. Perhaps that is what Mr. Yadav meant when he told reporters "strike when the iron is hot..." after filing his nomination papers on Thursday for the contest.

The seat has become a prestige issue for the party as in 2019 Mr. Pathak, in his third attempt at the hustings, wrested it from the SP when he defeated Ms. Yadav by over 12,000 votes.

There is a sense in the party that Mr. Tej Pratap would not have been able to take on the polarisation pitch that the BJP was expected to amplify in the coming days. After Mr. Yadav's entry, Mr. Pathak has said the contest has acquired the stature of an "India-Pakistan match".

"BJP is facing the heat of the youth anger because of the cancellation of recruitment exam for Uttar Pradesh police constables and UPPSC's RO ARO exam after the papers got leaked. Akhilesh*ji* has said in his rallies that it will bring down the BJP votes by 2.5 lakh in each constituency," said senior leader Muneer Ahmad.

Known for its *itra* (perfume) industry, Kannauj always had a fragrance of socialist politics in its air. Ram Manohar Lohia represented the seat in 1967.

A seasoned campaigner, Mr. Ahmad remembered that Kannauj had always been an important seat for the Samajwadis even before the party took a formal shape in 1992. After the collapse of the National Front government, Mulayam Singh joined hands with Chandra Shekhar and continued to be the Chief Minister with the help of the Congress.

"In the 1991 Lok Sabha election, the Chandra Shekhar-led Samajwadi Janata Party won only five seats and one of them was Kannauj where Chhote Lal Yadav won," he said. Since then, Kannauj has been a bastion of the SP.

Mulayam Singh had this habit of contesting from two constituencies and when he won from both, he would leave the safer one for a younger member of the Yadav clan.

In 2000, after he won Kannauj and Sambhal, he made way for his son from the former, marking his entry into electoral politics. Mr. Yadav retained the seat in 2009 before leaving it for his wife when he became the Chief Minister of the State.

Germany lets India buy small arms from its firms

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

In a major relaxation, Germany has granted licence to India to purchase small arms from German companies.

It has also significantly simplified the licensing requirements for the sale of military equipment to India, sources in the know said, stressing that this emphasises the importance Germany attaches to its relationship with India.

Germany is also looking at ways to scale up defence cooperation with India, with several military-to-military engagements lined up in the next few months. "Beginning of April, Germany granted small arms licence to India. which is a huge exception. The request from India was for spare parts and accessories for the National Security Guard," sources said.

Germany for some time has had a bar on the sale of small arms to third countries.

Study says solar radiation available for producing power falling in India

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The quantity of solar radiation available that can be economically converted by solar panels to electricity is showing an "alarming decreasing trend" in several locations in India, says an analysis by scientists at the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and published this month in the organisation's in-house scientific journal *Mausam*.

While increased aerosol load – fine particles from carbon emissions, fossil fuel burning and dust – and clouding are said to be causative factors, installing more efficient solar panels could help counter this, the scientists say in their paper.

Aerosols absorb the sunlight and deflect it away from the ground and they can also precipitate the formation of dense clouds that again block sunlight. The efficiency of solar panels are significantly influenced by the amount of sunlight falling on them.

Straight from the sun: A worker installs solar panels at a site in Greater Noida, around 45 km from New Delhi. AFP

For the study, the scientists looked at radiation trends at 45 in-house stations, which have instruments to measure solar radiation but used data from only 13 to compute the changes in solar photovoltaic (SPV) potential as they were the only ones with a continuous record from 1985 to 2019. SPV is the amount of radiation that may be practically available to be converted to electricity by panels.

SPV potential showed a general decline in all stations which included Ahmedabad, Chennai, Goa, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Pune, Shillong, Thiruvananthapuram, and Vishakhapatnam.

India's largest solar parks are located in the north-west of the country, particularly Gujarat and Rajasthan, and cities in both these States are also showing a decrease in SPV potential. As of today, India's installed solar power capacity is about 81 GW (1 GW is 1,000 megawatt), or roughly 17% of the total installed electricity.

India has ambitious plans of sourcing about 500 GW, nearly half its requirement of electricity, from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. This would mean at least 280 GW from solar power by that year or at least 40 GW of solar capacity being annually added until 2030. In the last five years, this has barely crossed 13 GW though the government has claimed that COVID-19 affected this trajectory and the country was on track to add between 25-40 GW annually in the coming years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier this year also announced a major initiative to fund rooftop solar installation in at least one crore houses across the country.

While the role of aerosols in blocking sunlight available on earth has been apparent since the 1980s, several studies have shown that there are variations both over time and location.

Global solar radiation showed a generally decreasing trend from 1981-2006. 1971-2000 showed greater dimming compared to 1981-2006. However, on the whole, there was a reversal in trends after 2001 with the exact causes unclear.

Decide on plea to allow women to take CDS: HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday ordered the Centre to reach a decision within eight weeks on a plea advocating for allowing women to join the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force through the Combined Defence Services (CDS) examinations.

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora closed the petition filed by advocate Kush Kalra, with a direction to the Defence Ministry to decide on his representation "in accordance with law" in eight weeks.

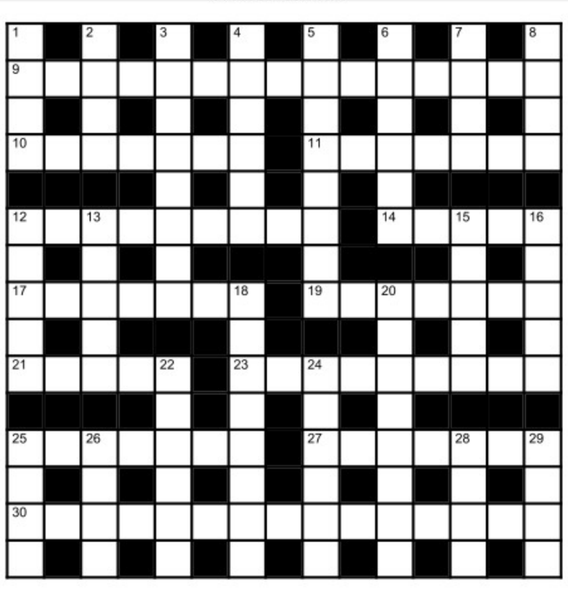
Mr. Kalra had made a representation before the Union government on December 22, 2023 to allow entry of women in CDS, but no response was received. The recruitment of female candidates into the IMA, INA, and IAF was not allowed either through the National Defence Academy examination or through CDS until August 2021.

TH CROSSWORD + 14160

(set by Hypatia)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

9 Sons urge to get Transformers? (7,8)
10 English politician's mistake disheartened king (7)
11 Study of animals around Australian's old timber yard (7)
12 Nut-free oat chips - Have one? (9)
14 Next Olympics held to celebrate (5)
17 Mother's reading Thai novel in another language (7)
19 Regularly referred by her blogs, find about rebel (7)
21 Ditch tailor (5)
23 Collapse after uncontrolled rapid rise (9)
25 Without a bar, new jail produces vegetable (7)
27 Shakes Arsenal's top scorer (7)
30 Find lifestyle changes involving criminal - one escaping coolly (4-11)

Down

1 Lamps seen periodically in part of church (4)
2 Stinging insect used to be predatory basically (4)
3 Spooner's average introduction for key role (4,4)
4 My school's covering what a singer can do! (6)
5 Catchphrase or term in Spelling Bee? (4,4)
6 Take no notice of flower on girl - some rose (6)
7 Fast food in two seconds (4)
8 Spot where buses stop regularly at terminals (4)
12 Draws little dogs cuddling master (5)
13 Yellow and green under stone (5)
15 Starts to tap and beat lightly above percussion instrument (5)
16 Bird's out early? (5)
18 At home, work fast and slow (8)
20 Spice used by 50% of people, for example (8)
22 Second veto (6)
24 Pursue victory, we hear it makes one shine (6)
25 Extra towel initially removed from hamper to sunbathe (4)
26 Lazy hero gets picked up (4)
28 Has leader lost from constituencies (4)
29 Dark sauce containing egg's cooked, say (4)

SUDOKU

			2		9	4		7
			8		7	3		
					5		9	2
	7		9			6	3	
	4						2	
	3	2			6		8	
9	8		3					
		5	6		8			
3		4	7		1			

No.SS6141 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	R	E	C	I	P	E		W	A	S	T	E	S	
	E		O		A		B		M		O		H	
A	G	E	S			S	U	R	R	O	U	N	D	E	D
	U		T		H		O		U		O		G	
C	L	O	S	E	T			K	A	N	G	A	R	O	O
	A					U		E		T		V		A	
P	R	O	M	I	N	E	N	T		B	A	I	T		
			E				P				I				
	S	U	R	F		T	R	A	N	S	L	A	T	E	
	Q		C		P		O		A				A		
M	U	S	H	R	O	O	M			M	O	M	E	N	T
	A		A		P		I		A		I		D		
P	R	I	N	C	E	S	S	E	S			N	O	O	N
	E		T		Y		E		T		E		O		
	S	Y	S	T	E	M		T	E	N	D	E	R		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	4	1	3	9	8	7	5	6
8	3	5	7	2	6	1	4	9
6	7	9	4	5	1	3	2	8
4	6	3	2	7	9	5	8	1
7	5	8	1	6	4	2	9	3
1	9	2	8	3	5	6	7	4
3	2	6	9	4	7	8	1	5
9	8	7	5	1	3	4	6	2
5	1	4	6	8	2	9	3	7

FAITH

Rama embodies dharma

People worship various Gods with distinctive image identities. Lord Vishnu holds a divine disc and conch. Siva is the three-eyed Lord (*Trinetra* or *Triyambaka deva*). Goddess Ambal possesses some unique identities. Is there any specific form or image of dharma? Brahma Sri Krishnan Ghanapatigal said in a discourse that Lord Rama had given Himself the form of dharma. (*Ramo Vigrahavan dharma*:)

"Ramo Ramo Rama ithi Prajanam" – People in Ayodhya hailed 'Rama Nama' – the thundering and tumultuous shout of righteousness. Rama showed us how to handle difficult situations deftly. He would never tell lies (*Ramo dwirnabi bhashathe*). Even Mareecha, the devil and Ravana's uncle, said Rama embodies all virtuous qualities.

He stands for the highest in man as a son, husband, king, and friend of the oppressed. He accepted exile without a demur and asserted the sanctity of promise and the virtue of obedience.

He was full of moral purity and grandeur. He can be taken as an example of brotherliness, filial duty, and faithful friendship.

Rama's conduct showed that He was a pure personality (*Ekapathni vratha*). He was equal to Mother Earth in displaying patience. Scriptures say chanting "Rama Nama" or thinking of Him would cleanse all our sins.

INBRIEF

Chennai Trade Center to host Automation Expo roadshow

Chennai will host the first Automation Expo Road Show to discuss the impact of AI and Robotics in process and factory automation. The road show, to be organised by IED Communications Ltd. as part of the Automation Expo 2024, will be held at the Chennai Trade Center on May 3, according to a release. About 50 participants from Mumbai would showcase their exhibits. About 500-1,000 users of instrumentation and automation are expected to visit the show, the organisers said.

Shriram Finance Q4 net profit rises 49% to ₹1,946 crore

Shriram Finance Ltd. said its standalone net profit for the quarter ended March rose 49% year-on-year to ₹1,946 crore. Net interest income increased 20% to ₹5,336 crore. Total income rose 22% to ₹9,498 crore. Net interest margin rose to 9.02% from 8.55%. Assets Under Management grew to ₹2,24,862 crore from ₹1,85,683 crore, the flagship company of the Shriram Group said. Gross non-performing assets declined to 5.45% from 6.21% and net NPA to 2.7% from 3.19%.

Centre accords AEO status to gem and jewellery sector

The Centre has extended Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status to the gem and jewellery sector, the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said. The AEO programme was introduced as a pilot project in 2011 by the Customs department as part of a broader framework for ease of doing business. Out of the 20 companies that had applied for AEO, Asian Star, a diamond and diamond jewellery manufacturer, had been granted the status.

Delicense Go First fleet: HC to DGCA

Delhi High Court also instructs DGCA to facilitate export of all 54 aircraft from India and provide export certificates; Go First bidders say High Court order will not deter their plans; next NCLT hearing on insolvency resolution on May 13

Soibam Rocky Singh
Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday ordered the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to process de-registration of grounded airline Go First's entire fleet of 54 aircraft sought by various lessors within five days and facilitate their export.

The High Court set aside the letters of communication issued by the DGCA to various lessors in May last year, when it put into abeyance their de-registration applications. This followed the National Company Law Tribunal's decision on May 10, to admit Go First's plea for voluntary insolvency and consequential moratorium prohibiting adverse actions by its lessors, and debtors. Following this 14 lessors moved the High Court.

The Delhi HC also instructed the DGCA to facilitate export of aircraft from India and provide export certificates along with other documents. It also authorised the lessor petitioners to undertake the maintenance of the grounded aircraft till their de-registration and export.

Earlier this month, NCLT granted an extension for completion of the resolution process till June 4. This was the third extension. The next NCLT hearing on the resolution process is on May 13. The resolution professional appointed by the NCLT, has received two bids for Go First. This includes a joint bid from SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh and Ease My Trip Co-Founder Nishant Pitti-led Busy Bee Airways. Another bid is from Sky One, an aviation firm headquartered in Sharjah, UAE, led by Jaideep Mirchandani.

"The de-registration does not alter our plans for the Indian aviation industry. If our bid goes through, Sky One can bring in its own assets to revive the airline as we are experienced lessors," said Mr. Mirchandani responding to the HC judgment. Mr. Pitti said they will evaluate necessary adjustments to their offer for Go First.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	73,730	-0.82
US Dollar	83.38	-0.12
Gold	72,850	0.48
Brent oil	89.41	1.84

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3080.40	-34.85
Adani Ports	1324.60	-5.95
Apollo Hosp	6258.60	-125.50
Asian Paints	2844.15	-17.30
Axis Bank	1130.30	3.30
Bajaj Auto	8974.30	239.40
Bajaj Finserv	1597.35	-58.20
Bajaj Finance	6731.20	-563.70
Bharti Airtel	1326.00	-12.70
BPCL	609.45	6.05
Britannia Ind	4800.45	-43.70
Cipla	1409.15	2.95
Coal India	455.80	3.35
Divis Lab	4016.35	172.55
Dr Reddys Lab	6252.10	33.35
Eicher Motors	4601.00	-14.20
Grasim Ind	2342.45	-25.00
HCL Tech	1473.85	-30.30
HDFC Bank	1509.80	-0.95
HDFC Life	587.85	-6.85
Hero MotoCorp	4491.60	-6.70
Hindalco	649.30	2.50
Hind Unilever	2222.65	-8.20
ICICI Bank	1107.90	-5.85
IndusInd Bank	1446.40	-49.70
Infosys	1430.25	-8.20
ITC	440.00	2.45
JSW Steel	887.25	-18.55
Kotak Bank	1608.50	-33.95
L&T	3605.20	-47.10
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4788.05	153.35
M&M	2044.90	-51.95
Maruti Suzuki	12703.35	-219.15
NestleIndia	2482.75	-79.90
NTPC	356.00	-3.20
ONGC	282.90	0.95
PowerGrid Corp	292.25	-1.05
Reliance Ind	2905.10	-14.85
SBI Life	1415.25	-29.20
State Bank	801.30	-11.40
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2498.60	6.75
Sun Pharma	1506.55	-13.60
TataConsumerProduct	1102.65	-3.60
Tata Motors	999.50	-1.75
Tata Steel	165.80	-1.90
TCS	3821.35	-30.85
Tech Mahindra	1278.75	88.45
Titan	3584.80	13.70
UltraTech Cement	9700.90	17.15
Wipro	464.60	3.60

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 26

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.15	83.47
Euro	89.24	89.59
British Pound	104.08	104.48
Japanese Yen (100)	53.07	53.28
Chinese Yuan	11.47	11.52
Swiss Franc	91.17	91.53
Singapore Dollar	61.10	61.35
Canadian Dollar	60.90	61.14
Malaysian Ringitt	17.43	17.51
Australian Dollar	54.35	54.56

Source:Indian Bank

RBI moots digital view of loan offers

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

In the backdrop of some fintechs gaming the system, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued draft guidelines on digital lending to enhance transparency.

The central bank proposed Lending Service Providers (LSPs) provide a digital view of all loan offers available to the borrower from all the willing lenders with whom the LSP has arrangements.

The regulator said it was observed many LSPs offered aggregation services for loan products, wherein an LSP or a Regulated Entity (RE) had outsourcing arrangements with several lenders and the digital lending app/platform of the LSP/RE matched the borrower to one of the lenders. In such cases, the identity of the potential lender to the borrower may not be known upfront to the borrower. Hence, it advised REs to provide a digital view of loan offers.

'Synchronous rebound likely for global economy in '25'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The global economy may witness a synchronous rebound in 2025 as major election uncertainties get sorted out and the central banks of the West may announce a couple of rate cuts later in 2024, said Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte India.

"India will likely see improved capital flows and a rebound in exports," Dr. Majumdar added.

Deloitte has revised India's annual economic growth projection to a range of 7.6%-7.8%.

HCL Tech Q4 net rises a tad to ₹3,986 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

HCL Tech reported fourth-quarter net profit was almost unchanged at ₹3,986 crore against ₹3,983 crore the tech firm had reported for the year-earlier period. Revenue from operations rose 7% to ₹28,499 crore.

"We continue to remain optimistic of the opportunities ahead of us," said CEO C. Vijayakumar. "Some of the large deals we won will move into a global delivery model in FY25, which will reduce revenue. The macro-environment, we are assuming, will be similar to FY24. We have a balanced portfolio which will deliver in any economic scenario."

HCL Tech had a hiring target of 15,000 freshers in FY24, while it managed to hire about 12,000 during the fiscal, re-calibrating demand with industry requirements, said Ramachandran Sundararajan, Chief People Officer. Hiring in FY25 is likely to be similar to FY24, HCL indicated.

Apollo 24/7 to raise ₹2,475 crore from Advent International

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Post merger, Keimed shareholders would hold a maximum of 25.7% stake in the combined entity

Apollo HealthCo (Apollo 24/7) has entered into a binding agreement with global private equity investor Advent International (Advent) to raise an equity capital of ₹2,475 crore.

In addition, the subsidiary of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd. (AHEL) said it had entered into a framework agreement to integrate 100% of Keimed Pvt. Ltd., promoted by the Apollo promoter group, with Advent in a phased manner over the next 24-30 months. Advent would invest in compulsory convertible instruments over two tranches to secure 12.1% stake in the merged entity at an enterprise value of ₹22,481 crore. Apollo 24/7 is valued at an enterprise value of ₹14,478 crore and Keimed at ₹8,003 crore. Post the merger, Keimed's shareholders would hold a maximum of 25.7% stake in the combined entity, while AHEL would continue to remain the largest controlling shareholder with at least 59.2% stake.

Maruti Suzuki Q4 net rises 48% to ₹3,878 cr. on higher sales

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. (MSIL) reported Q4 net profit rose 47.8% to ₹3,877.8 crore compared with ₹2,623.6 crore in the year-earlier period.

"This was on account of higher sales volume, favourable commodity prices, cost reduction efforts and higher non-operating income," the company said in a filing.

During the quarter, the company registered net sales of ₹36,697.5 crore against ₹30,821.8 crore in the same period of the previous year.

In the quarter ended March 31, 2024, MSIL sold a total of 5,84,031 vehicles, up 13.4% over the year-earlier period. For FY24, the company reported a net profit of ₹13,209.4 crore, up 64% compared with ₹8,049.2 crore in FY23.

Maruti Suzuki India registered net sales of ₹1,34,937.8 crore, up 19.9% over the previous year. The board has recommended the highest-ever dividend of ₹125 per share, the company said.

India's patent filings climbed 24.6% to 83,000 in FY23, shows Nasscom report

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Mirroring global trends, in FY2023, India saw 83,000 patents being filed, marking an annual growth rate of 24.6%, the highest in the last two decades, as per Patenting Trends report released by Nasscom on Friday.

The number of patents granted also saw a significant growth, rising more than two times between FY19-23. This trend was expected to spike with more than 1,00,000 patents granted between March 15, 2023 and March 14, 2024, it said.

The study also found over the past decade, the proportion of patents filed by residents (primary filers based in India) had doubled, climbing from 33.6% of total filings in fiscal year 2019 to more than 50% in fiscal year 2023. "This significant rise reflects a growing focus and heightened awareness of intellectual property rights in the country. Educational Institutes have been a key driver of this growth," Nasscom said.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Chennai Division (Project Organisation)
Tender Notice MSDAC

Sl. No.	Description of Work	Item No.1
1	Name of the Work	Provision of MSDAC with existing DCTC at Stations (To serve as Dual detection) and Replacing balance AFTCs in MAS GDR & MSB-TBM automatic block signalling sections of Chennai Division in Southern Railway
2	E-Tender No.	**PROJ MS_MSDAC_MAS_R2_2404 Dated: 16.05.2024**
3	Estimated cost of the work	Rs. 88,64,16,340.56/-
4	Bidding System	Two Stage Reverse Auction
5	Earnest money (EMD)	Rs. 45,82,100.00/-
6	completion period	18 Months
7	Pre Bid Conference	Date: 30.04.2024 Time: 12:00 Hrs.
8	Last date and Time of online submission (closing) of tender document	16.05.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs.
9	Website address, time and Date from which tender documents will be available	On Indian Railway Website i.e, **www.ireps.gov.in** from 24.04.2024
10	Validity of offers	90 Days

Note: The detailed Tender Notice, Tender document along with terms & conditions and if any corrigendum to tender is issued can be accessed through **(www.ireps.gov.in).**

Deputy Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Project, Chetpet, Chennai-31

Petronet LNG Limited

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) FOR SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR ARC FOR HIRING OF VOLVO BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS AT PETRONET LNG LIMITED, DAHEJ

Interested parties are requested to visit our website www.petronetlng.in for detailed eligibility criteria along with other necessary details for issuance of Tender document.

Note: PLL reserves the right not to issue the tender document and / or accept or reject any or all the bids at any stage of the process and/or modify the process without assigning any reasons on its sole discretion. No separate notification shall be issued in press. Bidders are requested to visit the website regularly to keep themselves updated.

Manager (C&P)
PETRONET LNG LIMITED
GIDC Industrial Estate, Plot No. 7/A, Dahej, Taluka Vagra,
Distt. Bharuch 392130, Dahej, Gujarat, Tel No: 02641-670232/233/235/231
E-mail id:- cnpdahej@petronetlng.in, sumitkumar@petronetlng.in

BHARAT DYNAMICS LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Enterprise, Ministry of Defence)
GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD - 500 032

Ref:BDL/CC/OT/GT/007/2023-24 **Dt : 27-04-2024**

e-PROCUREMENT ABRIDGE TENDER NOTICE
Inviting Competitive Bidding

Sl. NO.	Tender ID	Description	Estimate in Rs.
1	65743	**Providing Infrastructure Facilities at User Locations LEH (UT)Through EPC Method**	**166.76 cr.**

Please visit website **https://bdltenders.abcprocure.com, select offline tenders on dashboard** for further details. Bids should be submitted offline only. **"corrigendum if any shall be issued through our e-portal only and not in Newspapers"**
*Bidders are Requested to apply for online Vendor Registration in BDL website **http://172.25.1.64/bdldesign/login.php** for business prospects.

ADDITIONAL GENERAL MANAGER (Corp Comml)

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES VIJAYPUR, JAMMU - 184120

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR PLANNING, DESIGNING, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE GYM ON A TURNKEY BASIS AT AIIMS, VIJAYPUR, JAMMU

1. Proposals are invited from prospective bidders for the Establishment of the Gym on a Turnkey basis at AIIMS, Vijaypur, Jammu.
2. The interested bidders are requested to make a presentation before the competent authority on **06th May 2024** from 11:00 AM in the conference hall at Camp office, AIIMS Jammu, located at GMC Doctor's Guest House, Near Maheshpura Chowk Jammu-180001 (J&K).
3. The presentation should include the following:-
   (e) Years of Experience in the same field.
   (f) Past Performances/Experience.
   (g) Relevant Certificate for Quality Assurance.
   (h) 3D-Virtual Tour of the proposed Gym (Desirable).
4. Service Providers/Vendors are requested to visit the Gym Area in the Sports Complex at AIIMS, Vijaypur, Jammu, with the approval of AIIMS Authorities before their presentation date. For the Area and dimensions of the gym, please visit AIIMS, Vijaypur website (https://www.aiimsjammu.edu.in/) → Procurement → E-publishing.
5. In case of any queries, please contact **Dr. Rashid Anjum, (Chairman of the Sports Committee), Mobile No. 9419422770 / Dr Sushant Meinia (Member Secretary) Mobile No. 9877890931**

Deputy Director (Admin)
AIIMS, Vijaypur, Jammu

JERUSALEM

Hezbollah ambushes Israeli military convoy, killing civilian

GETTY IMAGES

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group fired anti-tank missiles and artillery shells at an Israeli military convoy in a disputed area along the border, killing an Israeli civilian, the group and Israel's military said on Friday. Low-intensity fighting along the Israel-Lebanon border has repeatedly threatened to boil in recent months. AP

MOSCOW

Russia says it struck train in Ukraine carrying Western arms

REUTERS

Russia said on Friday it had used missiles and artillery to target railway infrastructure and Western arms being transported by rail in Ukraine. Moscow's Defence Ministry said its forces had hit "Western weapons" being transported by railway one day earlier in the Donetsk region, and also targeted railway facilities in Kharkiv. AFP

PARIS

Students resume pro-Palestinian protests at university in Paris

AFP

Students at Sciences Po, a prestigious university in Paris, resumed pro-Palestinian protests on Friday, two days after French police broke up another demonstration. The protesters demanded that the administration cut ties with universities and companies over their alleged support for Israel's offensive in Gaza. AP

OUAGADOUGOU

Junta-led Burkina Faso suspends *BBC, Voice of America* for 2 weeks

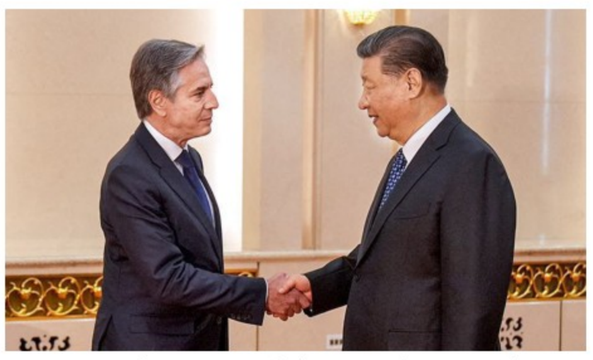
AP

Burkina Faso has suspended the *BBC* and *Voice of America* radio networks from broadcasting for airing a rights report accusing the Army of attacks on civilians in its battle against jihadists. The communications authority said it contained "biased declarations without tangible proof against the Burkinabe Army". AFP

China and U.S. should be partners rather than rivals, Xi tells Blinken

China is committed to non-alliance, and the U.S. should not create small blocs; while each side can have its friends and partners, it should not target, oppose or harm the other, says Xi, adding that China is happy to see a prosperous U.S.

Nikhil M. Babu
BEIJING



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of People, in Beijing on Friday. REUTERS

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday met U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Beijing and said China and the U.S. should be partners rather than rivals and should help each other succeed rather than hurt each other.

"This year marks the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. Over the past 45 years, the relationship has gone through wind and rain, and the two sides can draw a few important lessons: China and the United States should be partners rather than rivals; help each other succeed rather than hurt each other; seek common ground and reserve differences rather than engage in vicious competition; and honour words with actions rather than say one thing but do another," President Xi Jinping was quoted saying by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

Mr. Xi said China is happy to see a prosperous and thriving U.S. and he hopes that the U.S. can also look at China's development in a positive light. "I've said many times before that the planet is big enough to accommodate the common development and respective prosperity of China and the U.S. China is happy to see a confident, open, prosperous and thriving U.S. We hope the U.S. can also look at China's development in a positive light. This is a fundamental issue that must be addressed," President Xi said.

He said China is willing to cooperate, but cooperation should be a two-way street and China is not afraid of competition, but competition should be about progress together instead of playing a zero-sum game. "China is committed to non-alliance, and the U.S. should not create small blocs. While each side can have its friends and partners, it should not target, oppose or harm the other."

Mr. Xi said the Chinese saying "no progress means regress" applies to China-U.S. relations too. He said the stabilising trend in the China-U.S. relations did not come by easily and it is hoped that the two teams will continue working actively to follow through on the San Francisco vision he and President Joe Biden reached, so as to truly stabilise, improve and move forward the bilateral relations.

(The correspondent is in China at the invitation of the China Public Diplomacy Association.)

Pro-Palestine protests rock universities across the U.S.

Associated Press
NEW YORK

Pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrate outside the main gate at Columbia University, in New York on Friday. AP

The students at Columbia University who inspired pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country dug in at their encampment for the tenth day on Friday as administrators and police at campuses from California to Massachusetts wrestled with how to address protests that have seen scuffles with police and hundreds of arrests.

Officials at Columbia and some other schools have been negotiating with student protesters who have rebuffed police and doubled down.

Other schools have quickly turned to law enforcement to douse demonstrations before they can take hold.

As the death toll mounts in the war in Gaza and the humanitarian crisis worsens, protesters at universities across the country are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies they say are enabling the conflict.

After a tent encampment popped up on Thursday at Indiana University Bloomington, police with shields and batons shoved into protesters and arrested 33. And at Ohio State University, police clashed with protesters just hours after they gathered on Thursday evening.

Columbia officials said that negotiations were showing progress as they neared the school's deadline of early Friday to reach an agreement on dismantling the encampment.

Sri Lanka leases its white elephant airport

Agence France-Presse
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka said on Friday it had leased Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, a white elephant international airport built with Chinese loans, to a foreign joint venture, as the island nation's bankrupt government seeks to offload loss-making assets.

The small airport near a wildlife sanctuary on the southern coast opened in 2013 but was immediately plagued by problems, and has been a running sore on state coffers since.

Government spokesperson Bandula Gunawardana told presspersons that Cabinet had awarded a 30-year lease to a joint venture between India's Shaurya Aeronautics and Russia's Airports of Regions Management Company.

He did not give further financial details, but said only four other companies had shown an interest in managing the isolated airport, which currently has no scheduled flights.

The airport is named after former President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Scottish First Minister Yousaf faces no-confidence votes

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf on Friday said he would not resign following the end of a power-sharing agreement with the Scottish Greens that led to Opposition parties backing a no-confidence motion against him.

Speaking at an event in Dundee, Mr. Yousaf said he would not resign and was confident of winning the vote. The Scottish politician said he would lead the party into the U.K.'s coming general elections as well as Scottish elections in 2026.

Mr. Yousuf ended a power sharing agreement (the Bute House agreement) with the Scottish Greens on Thursday as cracks appeared in an already fragile agreement, following the SNPs decision last week to scrap climate targets. The Scottish Tories tabled a motion of no-confidence against Mr. Yousaf and Scottish Labour has tabled a motion against the entire government.

"The people of Scotland deserve a fresh start – this can only come with a Scottish election," Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar said, pointing to the National Health Service (NHS) appointment waiting lists and public finances.

Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf speaks to the media during a visit to Dundee, Scotland on Friday. REUTERS

Co-leader of the Scottish Greens, Patrick Harvie, said Mr. Yousaf did not have the confidence of the Scottish Parliament and needed to face the outcome of ending the power sharing agreement.

"He needs to bear the consequences of that reckless and damaging decision," Mr. Harvie told news agency *PA Media*.

To stay in power after a vote against him, Mr. Yousaf will need the support of his 63 SNP colleagues as well as the backing of 65 other Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). If he does not survive the vote, the SNP will have to find a new leader within 28 days, failing which there will be fresh elections in Scotland. If the SNP as a whole loses the vote, fresh elections will have to be called within 28 days.

On Friday, Mr. Yousaf said he hoped to work with the Greens on issue by issue basis.

Eyes were also on how Ash Regan, a one-time contender for the SNP leader position and now a member of former First Minister Alex Salmond's Alba Party would vote. The Alba Party said it would not back Labour's no-confidence motion and said those supporting independence for Scotland could rely on the Alba Party.

"As much as Humza Yousaf and the SNP find themselves in a tricky predicament, independence supporters will not turn back to the yoke of Tory and Labour mediocrity," an Alba Party spokesperson said.

The votes of no-confidence could be held as early as next week.

Sport

Sanjeev and Pravin taste success

FED CUP WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi
VARANASI

Winning move: Hardeep, bottom, had the measure of Amit Kumar in the 82kg final. SANDEEP SAXENA

Sanjeev produced a series of authoritative performances to claim the Greco-Roman 55kg gold medal in the Federation Cup wrestling tournament at the Maharaja Vibhuti Narain Indoor Stadium here on Friday.

The 23-year-old Delhi boy from Sonipat-based coach Kuldeep Singh's *akhara* impressed in every bout before outclassing Manish in the final to win his maiden gold medal at the elite level.

Sanjeev, who bagged a silver and a bronze in National championships at Jaipur and Pune respectively by rival factions earlier this year, went 1-0 up due to Manish's passivity and utilised his advantageous position in par terre to flip his rival for a 3-0 lead. Another take-down made it 5-0, but Manish injured his left ankle in the process and conceded the bout.

Kolhapur's Pravin Patil, an Army wrestler who landed a gold at Pune, rallied from 0-2 to beat Sunny Kumar 6-2 in the 63kg title clash. Patil's take-downs helped him secure victory.

The medallists
(Greco-Roman): 55kg: 1. Sanjeev (Del), 2. Manish (Har), 3. Manu Yadav (Chg), Anjit Munda (Jha); **60kg:** 1. Chetan (Del), 2. Ajeet Kumar (UP), 3. Mohit Narwal (Har), Abhishek Nishad (Chg); **63kg:** 1. Pravin Patil (Mah), 2. Sunny Kumar (Har), 3. Deshraj (Raj), Hariom Puri (MP); **67kg:** 1. Govind (Mah), 2. Bholu Dav (UP), 3. Deepak (Del), Himanshu (Har); **72kg:** 1. Ajay Dagar (Har), 2. Jagmal Singh (Raj), 3. Anil Ruhil (Chd), Anish Singh (Chg). **77kg:** 1. Ravi Kumar (Del), 2. Satender Yadav (Chg), 3. Parmanand Bujammagol (Kar), Chhagan Meena (Raj); **82kg:** 1. Hardeep (Har), 2. Amit Gope (Jha), 3. Bhupender (Raj), Praveen Hipparigi (Kar); **87kg:** 1. Ajay (Har), 2. Inderjit (Chd), 3. Darshan (Mah), Aditya Bedikyale (Kar); **97kg:** 1. Sonu (Har), 2. Vijender (Del), 3. Subham Kumar (Bih), Ritik (Chd); **130kg:** 1. Sonu (Del), 2. Yatendra (UP), 3. Mudassir Khan (MP), Ashish (Chd).

Harshit clinches gold; Laxita and mixed relay team finish with silver

Sports Bureau

Harshit Kumar won the men's hammer throw gold while Laxita Vinod Sandilea (women's 800m) and the 4x400m mixed relay team claimed silver medals at the 21st Asian under-20 athletics championships in Dubai on Friday.

Harshit threw a distance of 66.70m while his teammate Prateek (65.97) took the bronze. The Indian team, comprising P. Abiram, Kanista Teena, Navpreet Singh and Sandramol Sabu, clocked 3:24.86 for the mixed relay silver in the 4x400m race. China won the gold.

Laxita bettered her personal best by more than a second, clocking 2:07.10s for the silver. Tanvi Malik, the other Indian in the final, was sixth (2:13.42).

Laxita bettered her personal best (2:07.10s).

Meanwhile, Karnataka's Shreeya Rajesh claimed bronze in the women's 400m hurdles in 59.20s while her teammate Jeyavindhiya Jegadish finished sixth (1:02.06s).

After an eventful Thursday, the championship's second day when India won four golds, Friday was a bit of a disappointment with Sachin finishing fourth in the men's 10,000m race walk (45:50.56s) while his teammate Himanshu was disqualified. In the women's hammer throw, the Indian duo of Nadini and Anushka finished fifth (56.99m) and sixth (55.81m) respectively.

The Indian 4x400m mixed relay team took the silver.

Harshit, Prateek won gold and bronze in men's hammer.

The bright spots came from the men's 4x100m relay which finished second in its heat (40.43s) and entered the final. Also making the final were Sabita Toppo (14.10s) and Unnathi Aiyappa Bolland (13.72s) in the women's 100m hurdles.

PHENOMENAL FEAT

Punjab emerges King of the chase with incredible win over KKR

K.R. DEEPAK

PBKS created history in T20 cricket, successfully chasing a target of 262 against KKR at Eden Gardens on Friday. The previous best was South Africa's 259 against West Indies in Centurion in 2023. In the IPL, the highest chase was RR's 224 — the first one against PBKS in 2020 and the second versus KKR in this year's edition.

MAXIMUM IMPACT

Sixes galore as KKR-PBKS game witnesses a new high of 42

K.R. DEEPAK

The 42 sixes hammered during the Knight Riders-Kings match at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Friday is a new record in men's T20s. The joint previous best was the 38 in the SRH-MI and RCB-SRH contests earlier this season at the IPL. Kings' 24 maximums is the most by a team in an innings in the League.

POWER PLOY

Prabhsimran and I had to go ballistic in first six overs: Bairstow

K.R. DEEPAK

Jonny Bairstow and opening partner Prabhsimran Singh got Punjab Kings off to a flier during its astounding chase. "We knew we had to go ballistic in the PowerPlay. When you've to chase 262, you've to take risks in the first six overs. You have to try and whack the ball as hard as possible," said Bairstow.

FRENETIC STARTS

In an IPL first, all four openers breach the half-century mark

K.R. DEEPAK

The contest between KKR and PBKS in Kolkata on Friday saw openers from both teams score half-centuries — the first occasion in IPL history. Kings' Prabhsimran Singh (54) and Jonny Bairstow (108 n.o.) emulated the efforts of Phil Salt (75) and Sunil Narine (71) for the home team.

Bairstow leads Kings to record chase in insane slamfest

Prabhsimran and Shashank's matching onslaughts help Punjab reach the target of 262 with eight wickets and as many balls to spare; Salt and Narine's 138-run opening stand goes in vain for KKR

IPL-17

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Jonny Bairstow was at his destructive best to smash an unbeaten 108 (48b, 8x4, 9x6) and helped Punjab Kings create history by overhauling host Kolkata Knight Riders' record score of 261, by eight wickets, at the Eden Gardens here on Friday.

With this incredible achievement, Punjab Kings became the team to record the highest successful run-chase in the annals of all T20 matches.

Chasing the massive score put up by the host, which was the highest T20 total at the venue, Punjab Kings decided to bring in Prabhsimran Singh as the Impact Player (for Arshdeep Singh). The decision paid rich dividends as the opening batter took the KKR bowling attack to the cleaners, hitting boundaries and sixes at will.

The home side, which brought in Sri Lankan speedster Dushmantha Chameera in place of Australian left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc, failed to make a mark as Prabhsimran and Bairstow struck a 93-run partnership for the opening wicket.

Prabhsimran (54, 20b, 4x4, 5x6) played the lead role before getting run out by a direct throw from Sunil Narine.

The worst sufferer in the demolition process was Anukul Roy, the left-arm spinner whom KKR brought as Impact Player (for Venkatesh Iyer). Anukul gave away 36 in his two overs as Bairstow took over the task of annihilating the KKR bowling.

The English batter raced to his century in 45 balls. After his opening stand with Prabhsimran, Bairstow constructed two more partnerships – 85 for the second wicket with Rilee Rossouw before finishing the innings with an unbroken stand of 84 with Shashank Singh. The latter remained unbeaten on 68 off 28 balls, hitting two boundaries and eight sixes.

Earlier, KKR rode on the belligerence of its openers Phil Salt and Sunil Narine to reach 261 in its 20 overs. Salt emerged KKR's top scorer with a 75 (37b, 6x4, 6x6), while Narine made 71 (32b, 9x4, 4x6).

That the Knight Riders' opening partnership flourished was largely due to the largesse of the PBKS fielders who dropped three catches to help the deadly duo unleash a barrage of boundaries and sixes.

Narine, who was dropped by Hardeep Brar off the bowling of Harshal Patel in the third over when he was 16, utilised the reprieve to spectacular effect. Salt earned two 'lives' in the sixth and seventh overs before being dismissed on 75 (37b, 6x4, 6x6) in the 13th over when the score read 163.

Punjab's powerhouses: Bairstow and Shashank made light of an imposing total with some incredible hitting to give Kings a much-needed victory. K.R. DEEPAK

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Phil Salt b Curran 75 *(37b, 6x4, 6x6)*, Sunil Narine c Bairstow b Rahul Chahar 71 *(32b, 9x4, 4x6)*, Venkatesh Iyer run out 39 *(23b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Andre Russell c Harshal b Arshdeep 24 *(12b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Shreyas Iyer c Rabada b Arshdeep 28 *(10b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Rinku Singh c Ashutosh b Harshal 5 *(4b, 1x4)*, Ramandeep Singh (not out) 6 *(3b, 1x6)*; Extras (b-1, lb-1, nb-1, w-10): 13; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 261.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-138 (Narine, 10.2 overs), 2-163 (Salt, 12.3), 3-203 (Russell, 15.3), 4-246 (Shreyas, 18.3), 5-253 (Rinku, 19.2), 6-261 (Venkatesh, 19.6).

KINGS BOWLING
Curran 4-0-60-1, Arshdeep 4-0-45-2, Harshal 3-0-48-1, Rabada 3-0-52-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-33-1, Harpreet Brar 2-0-21-0.

PUNJAB KINGS
Prabhsimran Singh **(Impact Player in place of Arshdeep)** run out 54 *(20b, 4x4, 5x6)*, Jonny Bairstow (not out) 108 *(48b, 8x4, 9x6)*, Rilee Rossouw c Shreyas b Narine 26 *(16b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Shashank Singh (not out) 68 *(28b, 2x4, 8x6)*; Extras (lb-2, w-4): 6; Total (for two wkts. in 18.4 overs): 262.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-93 (Prabhsimran, 5.6), 2-178 (Rossouw, 12.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Chameera 3-0-48-0, Harshit 4-0-61-0, Anukul 2-0-36-0, Narine 4-0-24-1, Varun 3-0-46-0, Russell 2-0-36-0, Ramandeep 0.4-0-9-0.

Toss: Kings; **PoM:** Bairstow.
Kings won by eight wickets with eight balls remaining.

Next assignment

KKR: April 29 vs **DC**
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

PBKS: May 1 vs **CSK**
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

Capitals seek to sustain momentum, Mumbai Indians keen on shifting gears

Amol Karhadkar
NEW DELHI

All-rounder Axar Patel and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah could well be decisive in the key clash Bumrah tops the list of best economy rate for bowlers while Axar is placed third

They both hail from the same state. They are friends since their age-group days. Donning different shades of blue, they have stood out with their craft with the ball in an IPL dominated by towering totals.

No wonder then that the economy rate of all-rounder Axar Patel and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah could well be decisive in the key clash between host Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

After the 41st league match, Bumrah (6.37 runs per over in 32 overs) tops the list of best economy rate for bowlers with at least 10 overs this season, Axar is placed third in the list (7.06 runs in 31 overs).

Against a batting line-up full of power-hitters, the Gujarat duo will be looking forward to repeat the heroics performed at the Wankhede Stadium done earlier in the month.

Considering that both the teams are still languishing in the bottom half of the points table, a loss on Saturday could well push them into a must-win position for the remaining phase.

While the Capitals – with veterans David Warner and Ishant Sharma being unavailable due to fitness issues – will hope to carry on the momentum from Wednesday night's win, Hardik and Co. will be keen on switching gears with time running out.

Barring Bumrah, the remaining bowling unit has been a huge concern. With an on-song Rishabh and Axar on fire with the willow along with Jake Fraser-McGurk's range-hitting, captain Hardik will be banking on his bowling group to deliver against the odds.

Gripping lesson: Shaw is all ears as Ponting shares his expertise on how to wield the willow effectively. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	8	7	1	14	0.698
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	5	3	10	0.972
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	5	3	10	0.577
Lucknow Super Giants	8	5	3	10	0.148
Chennai Super Kings	8	4	4	8	0.415
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	8	-0.386
Gujarat Titans	9	4	5	8	-0.974
Punjab Kings	9	3	6	6	-0.187
Mumbai Indians	8	3	5	6	-0.227
Royal Challengers	9	2	7	4	-0.721

After the KKR-PBKS match on April 26

Table-topper Royals face Super Giants, look to set one foot in playoffs zone

Abhishek Saini
LUCKNOW

Far from the pack occupied in the mid-table scrap for the playoffs spots, Rajasthan Royals will indulge itself in the prospect of strolling its way in when it visits Lucknow Super Giants at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium in Lucknow in the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Saturday.

Runaway leader Rajasthan has won all three away games so far, and a fourth triumph will take its tally to 16 points, all but sealing a place in the playoffs.

Yashasvi Jaiswal regaining his mojo with an unbeaten 104 in the nine-wicket mauling of Mumbai Indians wiped out the only blemish in the Royals' top-order. Captain Sanju Samson would hope to emulate his exploits (82 n.o., 52b) from the Royals' 20-run victory over the Lucknow side earlier this season.

But Super Giants, high on the twin triumphs over Chennai Super Kings (CSK), will be no pushovers. The side will wait with crossed fingers for Mayank Yadav's return from injury. The pace phenom bowled in the nets on the match eve.

> We'll see how [Mayank Yadav] pulls up after the nets session today. He is pretty close, so fingers crossed
>
> **S. SRIRAM**
> LSG assistant coach

Taking cognisance of Rahul and Marcus Stoinis' telling contributions in the Super Giants' two wins, another leg-spinner, Yuzvendra Chahal, could be Royals' go-to deployment too. This IPL, Rahul's strike-rate has dipped to 93 against leg-spin while Stoinis has fallen to spinners five times in eight innings.

Lower down the order, Royals will seek a solution for Nicolas Pooran. The southpaw has salvaged his side by injecting momentum, hitting at a strike-rate of nearly 170 – the highest for a Lucknow batter.

Ahead of the eight ball: Captain Samson would hope RR can capitalise on its early surge. FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Today's matches

Delhi Capitals vs Mumbai Indians — Delhi, 3.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 34
DC 15 | MI 19
PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by 29 runs, 2024

Lucknow Super Giants vs Rajasthan Royals — Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 4
LSG 1 | RR 3
PREVIOUS MEETING
RR won by 20 runs, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

INBRIEF

Robinson and O'Rourke shine as Kiwis pip Pakistan

Opening batter Tim Robinson and fast bowler Will O'Rourke helped inexperienced New Zealand pull off a four-run win over Pakistan on Thursday at Lahore in the fourth T20I.

The scores: New Zealand 178/7 in 20 overs (Robinson 51, Foxcroft 34, Abbas Afridi 3/20) bt Pakistan 174/8 in 20 overs (Fakhar Zaman 61, O'Rourke 3-27). **Toss:** Pakistan. *New Zealand won by four runs and leads the five-match series 2-1.* **PoM:** ORourke.

Nethra qualifies for her second successive Olympics

Indian sailor Nethra Kumanan qualified for her second successive Olympics by finishing fifth in the ILCA 6 category (laser radial) at the 'last chance Regatta' event, an Olympic qualifier, in Hyeres (France) on Friday. The 27-year-old booked her ticket to Paris under the Emerging Nations Program (ENP) Quota. Nethra secured the Olympic quota as the top performer among sailors from ENP.

Yuvraj Singh named T20 World Cup 2024 ambassador

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced Yuvraj Singh as an ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 ambassador, which will be played in the West Indies and USA from June 1 to 29. "Some of my fondest cricketing memories have come from playing at the T20 World Cup, including hitting six sixes in an over, and it's very exciting to be part of this edition, which is set to be the biggest one yet," said Yuvraj in an official statement. He joins Chris Gayle and legendary sprinter Usain Bolt as ambassadors.

Senthilkumar and Akanksha enter last eight of PSA events

Top-seeded Indian Velavan Senthilkumar eased past Frenchman Matteo Carrouget 11-4, 11-6, 11-7 to move into the quarterfinals of the Batch Open squash, a $12,000 PSA Challenger Tour event in Paris. Elsewhere, National Games women's champion Akanksha Salunkhe beat Winifer Bonilla of Guatemala 11-8, 11-2, 11-9 to enter the last eight of the Expression St. James Open, a $20,000 PSA Challenger Tour event in Springfield, USA.

Emmaculate and Agnes to lead the charge in women elite field

The Kenyans had a breakout performance in the Valencia Ibercaja 10k run earlier this year, finishing in under 29 minutes

TCS WORLD 10K

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Emmaculate Achol came into the limelight after a breakout performance in the Valencia Ibercaja 10k run earlier this year. In an incredible race, two Kenyans – Emmaculate and Agnes Ngetich – went under the 10k women's world record.

Agnes (28:46s) snatched gold, and became the first woman to finish a 10k in under 29 minutes. Emmaculate (28:57s) was not far behind in second place.

Emmaculate, among the favourites in the international women elite athletes at the 2024 TCS World 10K Bengaluru, recalled how events unfolded at Valencia.

Star-studded line-up: The international elite men and women runners. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Before the Valencia 10k, Agnes announced that she would attempt to break the world record.

"So I told myself that if Agnes is trying to break the world record, so will I. We pushed each other hard, and it worked very well," Emmaculate said at a press conference here on Friday.

The heat wave in the city is likely to test runners on Sunday, but Emmaculate is not too concerned. "Hot, cold – we accept it. I will run anywhere," the 24-year-old said.

Emmaculate will be challenged by 2017 World Cross Country Championship bronze medallist Lilian Kasait, and 2022 World Indoor Championship 3,000m gold medal winner Lemlem Hailu.

2019 African under-20 championship 10,000m winner Bravin Kiptoo leads the international men elite field.

Kiptoo stated that he was destined to become a runner, as it came fairly naturally to him even as a child in Kenya.

"I used a run a lot as a kid. Our school was very far from home. Every morning I would run to school, run home for lunch, and then run to school and back.

"Sometimes, my parents would send me to the super market to buy groceries. They would warn me that I had to come back home in five minutes, or else... that is where my running journey started," Kiptoo said.

And did he complete the super market errand in time? "Yes, I would always be back home in under four minutes," Kiptoo replied.

SNAPSHOTS

Deepika enters the semifinals; Jyothi-Abhishek in final

Former World No. 1 Deepika Kumari beat Korea's Jeon Hunyoung 6-4 (27-28, 27-27, 29-28, 29-27, 28-28) in the women's recurve individual quarterfinals, while compound archers continued to shine to assure India a fourth medal, in the World Cup Stage 1 in Shanghai on Friday.

The day began with Jyothi Surekha and Abhishek Verma advancing into the compound mixed team final, with a 155-151 win over Mexico's Andrea Becerra and Lot Maximo Mendez Ortiz.

The fourth-seeded Indian recurve mixed team of Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj Bommadevara lost out to the top-seeded Korean duo of Lim and Kim Woojin 0-6. Tarundeep Rai also made a quarterfinal exit, losing to Andres Temino 3-7.

Vukomanovic.

Vukomanovic parts ways with Blasters

During his three years at Kerala Blasters, head coach Ivan Vukomanovic had been an inspirational figure and almost as popular as some of the club's biggest stars.

But on Friday, KBFC, announced that it has parted ways with Vukomanovic under whom the club had qualified for the Indian Super League playoffs for three consecutive years and had finished runner-up in his first year in Kochi.

The club's contract with the coach was officially supposed to end in 2025.

LIVE TELECAST

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5, 7.30, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7.30 p.m.

Pakistan vs New Zealand: 5th T20I, FANCODE, 8 p.m.

Indian men have their task cut out

THOMAS & UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
CHENGDU (CHINA)

Star singles players will aim for a consistent run as the Indian men embark on a tough journey of defending their title at the Thomas Cup, while a young women's team, sans the peerless P.V. Sindhu, will look to punch above its weight when it begins its campaign in the Uber Cup here on Saturday.

Just two years ago, India had sent shockwaves across the badminton world when it clinched its maiden Thomas Cup crown, considered the team world championship for men.

The Indian men will begin their campaign against Thailand, which has reigning world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn and young Panitchaphon Teeraratsakul.

But the most formidable will be third-seeded Indonesia, which has the likes of Jonatan Christie and Anthony Ginting and World No. 7 pair of Muhammad Rian Ardianto and Fajar Alfian.

In Uber Cup, Ashmita Chaliha will lead a young Indian team with all the big guns skipping the tournament after competing in a series of tournaments to qualify for the Paris Olympics.

The greenhorns will look to test their mental and physical fortitude against the top international players when they open their campaign against Canada in Group A.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Karthick 'tricks in Muslim Heroes' romp

B. Karthick scored a hat-trick as Muslim Heroes FC blanked Bangalore Reds FC 5-0 in the BDFA C-division football league here on Friday.

The results: Juno FC 4 (K. Vishnu Das 12, 30+1, G. Prithvi 17, Bablu Oraon 45) bt Bangalore Blues FC 1 (Anand Deka 11); Bangalore Mars FC 2 (Ragavan 7, Thangzolen 44) bt Excelsiors FC 1 (Anirudh Nabiat 58); Bangalore Yellows FC 1 (Shreyas 47) bt La Masia FC 0; Muslim Heroes FC 5 (B. Karthick 7, 31, 57, K. Rahul 30+1, Saveen 42) bt Bangalore Reds FC 0.

Anurag and Anvi reign

S. Anurag and P. Anvi emerged as the boys' and girls' singles champions respectively in the NuWare Asian Ranking U-16 tournament at the Topspin Tennis Academy courts here on Friday.

The results (finals): Singles: Boys: S. Anurag bt Srikar Doni 6-1, 6-4; **girls:** P. Anvi bt V. Deepshika 6-4, 6-1.

Doubles: Boys: Aditya Bikram Acharya & Tejas Ravi bt Krishank Joshi & Shardul Khawale 7-6(5), 6-7(4), [10-6]; **girls:** G.D. Meghana & Shaivi Gaurav Dalal bt Meha Patil & Riddhi Shinde 6-2, 6-3.

Man City crushes Brighton

Reuters
BRIGHTON

Phil Foden struck twice as Manchester City stepped up its bid for a fourth Premier League crown in a row with a ruthless 4-0 victory at Brighton & Hove Albion on Thursday. A day after Liverpool's title challenge suffered a huge blow, City kept up the pressure on leader Arsenal with a dominant display that left it one point behind the London club with a game in hand.

The results:
Premier League: Brighton 0 lost to Manchester City 4 (De Bruyne 17, Foden 26, 34, Alvarez 62).
Serie A: Udinese 1 (Pereyra 23) lost to Roma 2 (Lukaku 64, Cristante 90+5).